5.4.2020 Commencement Learn@Lunch Transcript

WEBVTT

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Heather Williams: Happy Monday, everyone.

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Heather Williams: I'm excited to have Ted Johnson here who's been at MIT for 20 years and is currently the managing director of Institute events. So although we're having to learn at lunch and we're not providing lunch.

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Heather Williams: I think Ted has probably provided us with many lunches Cupcakes, cookies, ice cream, all sorts of things. So it's good for it.

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Heather Williams: And Ted is taking responsibility for sorting out commencement for this year as well as thinking about how we're going to manage commencement in the future when we address the issue of having

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Heather Williams: Sorry about that.

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Heather Williams: I know that TED has a lot on his plate and really looking forward to hearing everything that he can share with us about commencement and he'll also answer questions for us. So I'm going to hand it over to you, Ted. And I'm not sure how much of that you just missed, but

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Ted E Johnson: That's all right.

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cwinner@mit.edu: Listen, I just do.

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cwinner@mit.edu: Can I just do a quick housekeeping to I'm

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cwinner@mit.edu: Sure it's fair for everyone. We are recording this session. And so we'll let Tech. Go ahead and press present

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cwinner@mit.edu: His presentation and then we'll take sides are questions at the end, I'm going to be managing questions. So if you either want to raise your hand to let me know you have a question, I can take you off mute.

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cwinner@mit.edu: Or you can just send me a private chat or chat to the group, and I'll be moderating the chat and then you can ask the questions for you as well.

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Heather Williams: With that started

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Ted E Johnson: Take it away. Thank you, Heather and Connie.

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Ted E Johnson: Um, I

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Ted E Johnson: There are many people during commencement and today I'm just, I'm representing the transition committee and I'll kind of explain what that is. So I'm really here on behalf of Gail Gallagher, who's executive director

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Ted E Johnson: For commencement and the chair of our transition committee, Professor James cutter BA in economics, we've been going around talking to the schools we intended to talk this spring two schools about

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Ted E Johnson: What we're planning for 2021 I will do that what we're planning isn't necessarily which what will happen because where we are at today. We don't know what's going on.

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Ted E Johnson: With everything. I will say that if all goes by scheduled tomorrow and announcement will come out to explain to everyone what we're doing for the class of 2020

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Ted E Johnson: online virtual commencement, which will take place at the end of the month.

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Ted E Johnson: On May 29th Friday, May 29 which is the day we would have had commencement this year. Remember, we moved the academic calendar and earlier week so that's going to be the day of the online ceremony, which is an opportunity to graduate. Our students graduate our class.

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Ted E Johnson: Which way to go until an in person commencement which the institute is proud to say will happen. We just need to get people moving on with their lives and have their degrees. So that's the moment in time, people can then say they've graduated from MIT for the class of 2020

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Ted E Johnson: I will say, we have no idea when we can bring students graduates back safely for their in person celebration, whether it's

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Ted E Johnson: This fall, which as days go by seems less and less likely, or the spring, which we don't know, and, and these discussions won't happen until

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Ted E Johnson: Certainly after the virtual commencement. On May 29 so what I'm here to do is really to talk about and my apologies, is I'm going to share my screen had a, could you give me permission to share. I don't know where I would see that

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cwinner@mit.edu: Ted, is there an option on the bottom. That's like a green square that says share screen.

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Ted E Johnson: Yes, I'm sorry. I was like, oh,

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cwinner@mit.edu: You're okay.

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Ted E Johnson: Am I up. Okay.

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Ted E Johnson: Let me on

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cwinner@mit.edu: Oh wait just a second. I don't see the presentation up. Let me see if I could.

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Ted E Johnson: Move.

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cwinner@mit.edu: That. There we go.

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Ted E Johnson: Right now what I need to do is figure out how to show the slide show.

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cwinner@mit.edu: And if you go to a perfect

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cwinner@mit.edu: There you go.

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Ted E Johnson: You just weren't supposed to see the pre. This is where we're at.

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Ted E Johnson: So the Commencement Committee, which has been around forever has been working to plan the virtual commencement for this year it'll be the responsibility of this new transition committee to work both on the 2020 commencement.

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Ted E Johnson: In person and also how we're moving forward with the future of commencement. So let me describe what we why. And then what we're trying to do for the

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Ted E Johnson: The commencement of 21 although we understand it may have to be delayed. So let's just call this the future of commencement how we need to change it going forward to the future.

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Ted E Johnson: So if you all under understand in 19 the true numbers I have now any day now. I could buy pull from the registrar's office. How many people will graduate in 2020 but in 2019?

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Ted E Johnson: The number of people that intended to attend commencement was 2978 there are usually about 3500 actual graduates and these are the ones that

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Ted E Johnson: Choose to come a number of those graduates are people who would have graduated in February or September.

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Ted E Johnson: Of the like the commencement about four and a half hours. Now we shaved off a half hour or so. Last year, the first time we gave the graduate degrees as part of the Hooding Ceremony on Thursday.

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Ted E Johnson: But if you think about when we open the doors about 730 in the morning to everyone's out around 230 it's such a long day.

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Ted E Johnson: We also have the issue with what happens with inclement weather in my actually ordinary but 32 years at MIT. I saw 3130 commencement so far.

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Ted E Johnson: And my one of the one of the early years. We did go inside and it was a mess and over those 30 some years, they're probably four times, you should have gone inside we chose not to.

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Ted E Johnson: So we have a real difficult time dealing with the number of people, which is about 14,000 people currently

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Ted E Johnson: That come to kill in court and we have new into a location for all. And we also know that the institute is expanding. In some areas, mostly graduate programs.

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Ted E Johnson: And we don't know in the future years. How large. All of this could be. So let me show you what happened last year at the end, near the end.

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Ted E Johnson: This shows killing court and we were still giving out degrees. And if you all remember the darker chairs the black chairs.

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Ted E Johnson: Is where the students would set. And you can see they just aren't returning back to their places and the base chairs in the back. The audience didn't stay, so it's not very

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Ted E Johnson: It's not very nice that people just don't stay to wait two hours to listen to names.

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Ted E Johnson: So what we are coming up with and there have been many iterations of how to change it. And as I talked to you in the School of Science, the way science is set up and the way you have graduates.

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Ted E Johnson: Is so different than how Sloan and setup engineering humanities architecture. Everyone every group school has a different way of doing things. And we couldn't come up with a way that necessarily works for everyone.

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Ted E Johnson: So there have been a lot of compromises away. We'd like to move forward and the moving forward is that there's a true feeling that we need to have a one MIT ceremony. We need to have a ceremony where everyone is invited to it. The time for the official

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Ted E Johnson: Charge from the President. The time for our guest speaker, and all of that will be planned in the future way of doing commencement would continue to be on our Friday morning schedule with a fight Friday morning ceremony where everyone is invited all schools all degrees.

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Ted E Johnson: Then after the charge of the graduates after the whole program, we would leave killing court and all of that, and about we think about 90 minutes long.

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Ted E Johnson: Trying to keep it to about 90 minute on in the afternoon, we would reassemble our bachelor's students are classes. So this could potentially be the class of 21

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Ted E Johnson: Would gather with some and MN students, but that group would gather in a tent on the athletic field. The only location, we can do a tab that would hold five 6000 people

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Ted E Johnson: Without would mean what do we do with the masters and the PhD students well the intent is to do that as a school based program and the school based program on the schedule will it be to try to do all of those on Thursday.

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Ted E Johnson: They would be organized by the schools and would award the degrees with the deployments for both the Masters and Doctoral students on Thursday.

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Ted E Johnson: So yes, there's a group of people, two thirds of our graduates will have already received their diplomas before they come on Friday morning to the one MIT ceremony.

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Ted E Johnson: Then the we need to break it up in that we also need that tent four or five 6000 people for the graduate degrees in the School of Engineering. They are so large, we would need that tent.

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Ted E Johnson: We've talked about it. We do not feel comfortable offering killing court as a location for any of the other schools or any other degrees because humanities has like 40 students. And that wouldn't work.

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Ted E Johnson: And we have the feeling, we heard from the undergraduates that

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Ted E Johnson: If one part of the group graduates from killing court, all of them should have the opportunity to in court. So that's the direction speeches only on killing court.

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Ted E Johnson: So our committee is really trying to figure out the schedule work with the schools on how they could implement their, their own ceremonies.

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Ted E Johnson: Focus on creating new traditions for the overall one MIT program and figure out how to pass off from one program to moving the students to the tense, the tent in the afternoon and centrally the institute would do all the arrangements for the undergraduate bachelor's ceremony.

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Ted E Johnson: But it would it would turn to the five schools.

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Ted E Johnson: Well, when you bring in Schwartzman whatever six schools to handle their sermons on Thursday.

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Ted E Johnson: And we would like to implement this in the one year and learn from it. So that's why it's called a transition to the new world, but also evaluating how it's going to make it work for future years.

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Ted E Johnson: So how does this affect school, school science, the only numbers. We have one from

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Ted E Johnson: And there were 145 graduates who chose to attend the ceremonies on

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Ted E Johnson: In 2019 and just to point out of the hundred and 45 143 were PhD students and only two were master’s students in that year from the School of Science.

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Ted E Johnson: So we take all of them and we figure, as has been the norm of four guests per person that would be

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Ted E Johnson: We would need a location for your ceremony of about 725 people plus faculty plus other guests. You may choose. So we'd like to offer for that Kresge Auditorium with seats just over 1100 seats has great stage to do a presentation of the diplomas and

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Ted E Johnson: In all, if you go by the timing, we do for the pudding ceremony. Last year, the hundred and 45 students to get both diplomas and hoods.

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Ted E Johnson: We estimate to be at 31 minutes if you don't at that clockwork speed, but there are many and any program ideas that you could do incorporate a speaker incorporated speech by the dean.

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Ted E Johnson: Have a students. Whenever you feel so is appropriate for the advanced degree ceremony for the School of Science.

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Ted E Johnson: Now let me mention just quickly about Kresge Auditorium, we have to play with locations and available venues. We are also looking to have Kresge available for the School of Architecture and Planning also

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Ted E Johnson: That would mean that there's potential for the two programs science and architecture. There's plenty of time to have one ceremony and flip it.

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Ted E Johnson: To another ceremony. We have just written out which doesn't have to be this way. It's really how we want to work it out that maybe the School of Science be in the morning on Thursday.

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Ted E Johnson: Thinking that the hood him students in the past, always came on Thursday. And since you're 99% PhDs. Maybe the morning would make the most sense.

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Ted E Johnson: Then we could flip the auditorium to be available for architecture either the afternoon or the evening.

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Ted E Johnson: So I checked in with Heather. And I wondered how far we may want to get into this

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Ted E Johnson: We did not consider anything about how schools may want to do departmental receptions

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Ted E Johnson: But I could imagine that there will be a tent outside of Kresge Auditorium, so that tech could be available for a school wide reception.

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Ted E Johnson: But we could also make available the typical venues tense and otherwise that your different departments have used to have your ceremonial receptions

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Ted E Johnson: And that could be however you like we're sort of presuming that departmental school based receptions for advanced degrees on Thursday, maybe how it lays out

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Ted E Johnson: We don't know. And we need more time to think about how Friday would work with a ceremony with everyone Friday morning.

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Ted E Johnson: We need some time to get all the undergraduates up to the tent with their families over the lunch hour so we may have to do an institutional reception.

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Ted E Johnson: For everyone, or at least for the undergrads in that scenario but that's all part of our listening to what the schools are considering and listening to our students again what they'd like when they think about the new the new world.

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Ted E Johnson: So the end of all this is that we're trying to make it the whole ceremony, the future ceremony really meaningful to both our students, the faculty and the alumni, how they fit in with following with reunions is still a bit unknown.

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Ted E Johnson: But we would like to hear from all of you, how you feel would work for your school and work with your dean and Heather and everyone to come up with some kind of plan for the future.

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Ted E Johnson: So I'm going to keep it brief. And that's really where we're at. And I'd love to hear your thoughts on what you would like to do. So I'm gonna stop share so I can see many more of your faces.

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Ted E Johnson: Very good.

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cwinner@mit.edu: Thank you so much. Ted for that presentation. So we're going to open up the floor to questions. So if you have any please either click on the raise hand icon or send a message and chat and we can start answering your questions.

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Heather Williams: I have a question to the departments are you thinking about having virtual events this year.

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cwinner@mit.edu: It looks like EAPS is planning to I believe chemistry is also planning to yep

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Heather Williams: So if any of you any of the academic departments would share what you have in mind, that would be great. Instead of, you can say anything that you know about what other schools and departments are doing for this year that would also be super helpful.

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Danielle Doughty: For chemistry, I can just say we are still in the planning process, but we are going to have a zoom event of some sort and call out our graduates by name and highlight them on zoom with the department head and

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Danielle Doughty: Other faculty, the PhD mentors.

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Danielle Doughty: People like that. That's our preliminary groundwork that we're laying at the moment.

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Megan Jordan: Yeah.

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Ted E Johnson: I'll conclude it.

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Megan Jordan: For EAPS as well, we're still very much in the planning stages. And we have another meeting this afternoon about it.

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Megan Jordan: We're thinking about some small virtual events every day, the week of commencement. So starting on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and then letting commencement be the main thing at the end of the week.

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Ted E Johnson: We've not heard from any of their school department, as far as I know what their plans are.

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Ted E Johnson: For the timing. If you do anything for Friday. What will be announced. Is that the official ceremony, it won't be at 10 o'clock in the morning. This was a great discussion.

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Ted E Johnson: Because of the, the students been all over the world. We want to try to get at least a more reasonable hour for the East Coast and West Coast of the United States. So the actual ceremony, time will be 1pm on Friday.

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Ted E Johnson: Now, what we're gonna do is we're going to do a bit of programming. If you've been out of Kilian court. We have done video programming on our Jumbo Tron screens.

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Ted E Johnson: Because students because the audience comes out so early. So we're planning, about an hour programming starting at 12 noon true ceremony, one for

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Ted E Johnson: We hope to do it for one hour.

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Ted E Johnson: Then in the after that hour we will continue more of the programming and work a little bit more with the Alumni Association and some of what they're they'd like to broadcast

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Ted E Johnson: So, so we imagine that the audience at 12 will start to build up to one o'clock, and then when it concludes to it'll start to fade off. So I think the official commencement time on May 29 this year should be considered to be like 12 to three.

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cwinner@mit.edu: Okay. Um, so just is that kind of the one official kind of time block that the institute has planned for their activities that people should work around just that kind of 12 to three on Friday.

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Ted E Johnson: I think you should mostly

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Ted E Johnson: Definitely, definitely wanted to and I would throw in I'd throw in the noon to two. It's. We're not exactly sure how many people will stick around after the from the three o'clock on and

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Ted E Johnson: So officially it's 12 to three, but that last hour is kind of iffy.

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Ted E Johnson: Well, I'm trying to pull in some people.

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cwinner@mit.edu: Perfect. And I do have a couple of questions that have come in and so for one person. I think this all makes great sense for next year. However, what will I need

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cwinner@mit.edu: What I need the most help with for my DLC is what is happening this year. Okay. So it's that kind of 12 to three and a block. Perfect.

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cwinner@mit.edu: Let's see. Then we had another one, come in.

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cwinner@mit.edu: We have another question. And someone wants to do with the whole program be recorded.

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Ted E Johnson: Oh, yes, yes, we will immediate soon after the whole program will be probably watched over and over

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Ted E Johnson: Some schools. We've been in touch with a number of ideas and 90 plus institutions. Some schools are choosing to do a second broadcast at midnight, but I think they're involving more

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Ted E Johnson: Social media and wave engage more people as part of it where we're going to suggest different social media platforms, but that interaction is not necessarily part of the virtual ceremony.

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cwinner@mit.edu: Perfect. Um, does anyone else have any questions as

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Heather Williams: Well, no other questions I

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cwinner@mit.edu: Doesn't look like any more have come through. Does anyone else's about dashboard, feel free to

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Heather Williams: Already well

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Heather Williams: You have a little bit more free time. Thank you so much for coming out. And I'm sure that we will connect with you again once we're back on campus and we're figuring out what next year is going to look like. And I assume that we can be back in touch. If we have questions after this

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Ted E Johnson: Anytime.

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Ted E Johnson: It's a great pleasure I bite my screen behind me is where we would have been meaning to for commencement. This year, but we're not quite setting it up that way.

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Ted E Johnson: And so look out for the announcement tomorrow or so for the May 29 and then at some point.

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Ted E Johnson: In the fall, we can do better in person 2020

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Ted E Johnson: So do appreciate you all, and you can always write to MIT. And we all get the question.

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Ted E Johnson: Thank you.

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Heather Williams: Thank you so much.

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Heather Williams: Bye.

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Ted E Johnson: Bye bye.