



UPPER SCHOOL GRADUATION

Taipei American School hosted its annual graduation ceremony for the class of 2020 on Saturday, May 23. This ceremony, which happens annually in May to honor the graduating class, featured many differences this year as the school was forced to reimagine its location and format due to social distancing guidelines enforced by the Taiwan government in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Taipei American School is the first school in Taiwan to host a physical graduation ceremony on its campus this year, although some other schools are in the midst of planning ceremonies for later this spring and summer.

Taipei American School worked tirelessly to follow the Taiwan's Ministry of Education guidelines set forth for schools. In particular, the administration worked closely with our compliance officer, Ms. Rachel Lin, to ensure we held a safe and fun last gathering for the Class of 2020. Although some limits on gathering sizes were lifted immediately prior to the ceremony, social distancing measures remained in place; this meant that we had to limit the ceremony to only students, two guests, and a select group of volunteers. As the

event planning continued it became clear that it would not be appropriate to have the entire faculty attend the event when we were unable to invite all parents and families.

"We are one of very few learning communities fortunate enough to hold a graduation ceremony with students physically present for our resilient and amazing Class of 2020," Head of School Dr. Sharon D. Hennessy said. "Together, the school worked to put student safety and health above all else. We had to be cautious, perhaps more cautious than some wish and less so than others desire, but we remained confident that this was the right decision for our community to mark this special occasion in a year overly marked by tragedy."

The commencement and graduation ceremony was held outdoors with all attendees wearing face masks, despite a small rainstorm

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passing through the area due to a nearby typhoon. It began at 9:00 am, both in person and via livestream. Because the school wanted to keep the ceremony shorter due to the weather and health concerns, the traditional speeches and music were cut short in person but later added to the footage of the ceremony to create a full graduation ceremony at a later date.

"I am saddened that we cannot have our traditional graduation in the middle school gym, but I am so thrilled that we can have a ceremony at all," said Upper School principal Andrew Lowman. "I appreciated all of your flexibility and support as we wrap up a truly historic school year."

Although students and guests were required to wear masks for the duration of their time on campus for graduation, and were not allowed to take photos during the event, the families of graduates were allowed to schedule times on both Saturday, May 23 and Sunday, May 24 for taking professional photographs on campus to mark the occasion.

Please check the TAS Parent Portal for a full digital album of official graduation photos from the event.