

## Why a “gap year” is not the answer

Since March, the Covid-19 pandemic has turned everyday life on its head, and higher education has not been immune.

Graduating high school seniors and their parents, concerned with the safety of college in the fall, are faced with the possibility of a freshman year that is mostly online, and a living-learning experience that might not live up to its price tag. Now more than ever, they are scrutinizing the ROI of higher education, and understandably so. However, the notion that a gap year will provide a well-timed pause is flawed. Typical gap year activities, including traveling, working to save additional money or joining the Peace Corps, are not viable options during this temporary “new normal.” A safer, more strategic opportunity exists.

I invite you to scrutinize North Central’s value proposition. We offer small classes taught by outstanding faculty who not only know their students’ names, but also their goals. We’ve also established the [NC ADAPT](#) (Assurance of a Disruption-Free Academic Planning Timeline) initiative, which is our promise to deliver a high-quality collegiate education, including our wraparound services, to all students who enroll for Summer or Fall 2020. Our degrees are easily transferable, and students can “stack” their credentials to fit their objective. We are proud to offer all of this on a beautiful campus, at a \$40,000 savings over the first two years at many four-year Michigan universities. I invite you to [tour our campus virtually](https://youtu.be/Yrri9U36hqg) [https://youtu.be/Yrri9U36hqg] to learn more about who are and what we offer.

I submit that when we evaluate which aspects of our pre-Covid life we ought carry forward once this crisis ends — and it will end — education should be first on the list. History and data tell us that the highest earning potential is reserved for those with advanced skills and a college degree. And what better way to leave your mark on this world than by pursuing a career that is equal parts fulfilling and impactful?

Challenging as this crisis has been, now is not the time to withdraw or put one’s goals on hold, even temporarily. Rather, we ought lean into this experience and leverage it to our benefit where possible. Now is a time for the dogged pursuit of these goals, because doing so represents not only a belief in a return to normal, but in an even brighter tomorrow.

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