

Office of the Provost: Update to the Howard University Community

HU Communications <ouc@howard.edu>

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To: Alfred, Marcus <marAlfred@Howard.edu>

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Office of the Provost



June 8, 2020

Dear Howard University Community,

These are turbulent times for our community, the country and globally. I hope that you are each safe and doing well as we manage the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as continuing to advocate to create a more just and fair society. I wanted to provide an update regarding the reopening of Washington, DC, and planning for the Fall, 2020 semester. Last week, on May 29, 2020 Mayor Muriel Bowser announced the transition of Washington, DC to Phase One of the District's reopening plan. This transition allowed for additional businesses to reopen, with appropriate social distancing measures in place, as well as relaxation of "stay at home" orders. Governor Larry Hogan of Maryland, and

Governor Ralph Northam of Virginia also furthered the reopening status of their respective states, moving to Phase Two of their reopening plans.

The Taskforce formed by President Frederick to guide planning regarding the reopening of the physical campus has met several times, and is preparing relevant recommendations and guidelines for consideration. The Fall 2020 Preparation Committee also continues to meet to assess the many complex and operational issues involved in re-opening the campus including testing requirements, social distancing, athletics, sanitation of the campus, housing assignments, the protection of high-risk individuals, and much more. As noted previously, we anticipate that a formal decision regarding the format of instruction for the Fall, 2020 semester (face-to-face, fully online, or hybrid) will be announced by President Frederick in mid-June.

As we continue to transition to deal with the significant impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our lives, and the changing status of the pandemic, we will also start to modify access to the physical campus, consistent with the Mayor's reopening plan, CDC guidelines, and best practices. The Office of Residence Life has communicated a move-out process for students who were residential during the Spring, 2020 semester to remove their belongings in a manner designed to support everyone's health and safety by maintaining social distancing and eliminating crowding. This process will be conducted over a two week period.

Traditionally, our health professional students, including medical students and dental students are among the first to begin their academic year. Third and Fourth year medical students will begin returning to clinical rotations in Howard University Hospital (HUH) over the next few weeks. A number of Nursing and Allied Health, as well as Pharmacy students will also be participating in clinical rotations shortly. Prior to entry at HUH, each health professional student will be tested for COVID-19, and be provided appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to assure their safety, as well as the safety of our patients and health professional staff. HUH has also implemented a number of additional protocols, including temperature checks and self-monitoring of symptoms, to maintain safety. I want to especially thank our health professional clinicians, students, faculty, and staff for their support of the Benning Road Clinic COVID-19 testing site and the Pennsylvania Ave Baptist Church testing site established by the University to help address

the inequities in access to care that disparately impact communities of color, even in the nation's capital.

We will continue to work with faculty in the Cathy Hughes School of Communications, School of Social Work, School of Law and other programs regarding the process for restoring experiential training for students, consistent with accreditation expectations and public health guidance.

Howard University faculty, staff and students have been deeply involved in the community response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and are to be commended. I want to also take this opportunity to thank faculty in the Cathy Hughes School of Communications, School of Business, School of Divinity, School of Education, School of Law, School of Social Work, College of Engineering and Architecture, and College of Arts and Sciences for your continued commitment to our community, and creativity in meeting the challenges that we have faced.

A Faculty Town Hall is being scheduled for Thursday, June 11, 2020 to provide updates to faculty, and discuss issues of importance and concern related to Fall 2020 preparation, instructional methodologies and needs, additional training for online instruction, social distancing, as well as health and safety concerns. We will also be scheduling similar opportunities to address questions and concerns from students, staff and alums.

As outlined by various health and political leaders, we are entering another phase in the pandemic, and our response must adjust accordingly. We face significant challenges as we consider how to provide a first class Howard University education to a generation of students impacted by a global pandemic, social unrest, political dysfunction, systemic racism and oppression, and the personal obstacles that have threatened to marginalize students' opportunity for success. Howard University has always risen to the challenge, and has demonstrated the leadership and commitment necessary to improve the condition and lives of our community. We will continue to do so. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once stated, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." The same is true for institutions. Thank you for standing with our students and our community. God bless.

Excellence in Truth and Service,

Anthony K. Wutoh, Ph.D., R.Ph.
Provost and Chief Academic Officer



Office of the Provost
2400 6th Street NW
Washington, DC 20059

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