



Presidential Directive 2020-7

American Baptist College COVID-19 Operational & Academic Modifications 2020 Spring Semester March 13, 2020

PURPOSE

This Presidential Directive provides guidance on operational and academic modifications being made to facilitate social distancing in conformity with World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and state and local public health agency guidance pertaining to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, now affecting the local area, the state of Tennessee, the nation, and the world. As an institution focused on providing ethical, social justice leadership, American Baptist College cannot and should not be an “island unto itself” and must take steps to protect and advance the health of its campus community, as well as the community at large. This Directive was developed following review of emergency protocols promulgated by other colleges and universities, with specific guidance patterned after emergency procedures published by Smith College.

CHANGES IN SPRING BREAK

The College’s Spring Break will now start Monday, March 16, 2020, instead of Monday, March 30, 2020. More details are in the academic section of this report.

OPERATIONS

The College remains open. However, effective Monday, March 16, 2020, ABC will modify campus operations to promote social distancing by permitting its full-time employees to work remotely three (3) days each week. Wednesdays of each week, is hereby designated as a “all hands on deck” day and all non-symptomatic full-time employees are required to report consistent with their previously approved work schedule. Non-symptomatic full-time employees are also required to work on-site one other day each week as determined through discussions with the vice president to whom each individual employee reports. During this modification of operations, the College’s dormitory facility will remain open, so that residential students will not be required to move out or travel unless they choose to do so.

Students will not be permitted to invite or entertain guests on campus while this directive remains in place to reduce the potential for community transmission within the campus community. Other restrictions intended to limit potential exposure to COVID-19 may also be implemented. Limited housing, dining, library, and health and wellness services will be available. Students choosing to remain in residence on the campus will be required to have a daily temperature screen and report any symptoms associated with COVID-19. Likewise, employees will be required to have a temperature screen and report any symptoms associated with COVID-19 prior to commencing work whenever on campus. The Health and Wellness Center will be open for temperature screens Monday thru Friday from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m.

ACADEMICS

Responding to the need to deliver academic instruction consistent with social distancing recommended to minimize community contact and reduce the spread of infection by the COVID-19 coronavirus, American Baptist College will institute the following changes:

Academic Calendar—In person classes will be offered on campus through Friday, March 13, 2020. Spring Break will now begin two weeks early, effective immediately, March 16th, and ending Sunday, March 22nd.

Semester Revision--Alternate modes of instruction will be offered for the curriculum, beginning on March 23rd. Spring classes will end after a full term of instruction and according to a revised schedule under development by the Academic Leadership Team at the direction of the Vice President for Institutional Strategy and Academics.

Graduation—Seniors completing all coursework with satisfactory grades will graduate and receive a diploma. While we do not have enough information yet to make a final decision on Commencement, we will advise students and their families to ensure their travel plans are as flexible as possible should rescheduling be required.

Summer Programs—The college has not yet made a determination for summer programs.

Academic Continuity—All students, regardless of their physical location, will receive the same level of curricular delivery. Following emergency guidelines communicated by our accrediting body, the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE)¹ the Federal Office of Student Aid (IFAP)², and recommendations by ABC Committee for Faculty and Curriculum Assessment (CFCA), ABC will support faculty to make full use of existing technologies to either a) complete course instruction as specified in their existing course syllabus, or b) modify or redesign course syllabi to accomplish recalibrated learning goals.

For purposes of compliance with this directive, distance learning strategies may be accomplished through use of the college learning management system (Canvas) or online platforms and applications to which faculty have access, familiarity, and ease of use. Distance learning strategies must, however, continue to meet the federal Department of Education requirement for “the institution [to] communicate to students through one of several types of technology—including email—described under 34 CFR Section 600.2, and instructors must initiate substantive communication with students, either individually or collectively, on a regular basis.”³ The ABC – CFCA will work with faculty to develop compliant and effective course modifications as needed.

Grading—All Spring 2020 classes will be moved to mandatory Pass/Fail grading. Each faculty of record retains responsibility for clearly defining and documenting achievement of student learning artifacts required to pass each course. Pass/Fail grading is being instated to recognize the extraordinary character of current circumstances. As we move instruction into alternative modes, we are necessarily changing our agreements about expectations and assessments. In a new and unfamiliar environment, we cannot hold faculty and students to expectations constructed in and for a different instructional experience.

Grades for Spring 2020 courses will not be factored into GPA calculations.

WEBSITE UPDATES

The College’s website will be updated to include a section focusing on frequently asked questions and responses about the coronavirus and its impact on the campus. Faculty, staff and students are encouraged to check the website for new and developing information on a regular basis.

These operational and academic modifications remain in effect until further notice.

1. Email Re: Coronavirus and ABHE Institutional Alternatives (March 13, 2020).

2. Office of Postsecondary Education, Re: Guidance for interruptions of study related to Coronavirus (COVID-19), (March 5, 2020).

3 Ibid.

Mission Statement: *The mission of American Baptist College, a Historically Black College with a liberal arts emphasis, is to educate, graduate, and prepare diverse students for Christian leadership, service, and social justice in the world.*

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