

Campus Announcement Regarding the Fall 2020 Term Written Transcript of the Announcement Video

Good afternoon, Bereans.

The past few months have been fraught with uncertainty and anxiety as we're all confronting difficult national events while also learning to navigate aspects of our lives during a global pandemic, a pandemic that has killed more than 118,000 people in the U.S. alone.

Our decision three months ago to cease on-campus instruction was necessary. It was the right decision, in spite of the disruption it caused. I want to commend out faculty for being nimble and agile when called to move from in-person classroom instruction to a strictly electronic form of distance learning.

And I want to extend a special thank you to our students for understanding what seemed like a drastic move, and for giving us grace in such a time of upheaval for them.

I also need to thank our donors for their continued commitment to Berea. Some stepped up to fill in the gap for our international and DACA students, who are not eligible to receive any of the federal CARES Act funding that we received to distribute to our other students. Other donors gave additional gifts to cover the funds lost when our admissions team waived the \$50 deposit for admitted students at a time when many families are struggling with layoffs and job loss. We also had donors make gifts to help us complete scholarships. Our community of supporters is always there to help us in a pinch, however they can, and we are so grateful for that generosity.

And thanks to these collective efforts, you all helped us make it through the spring semester. Now that we're in the summer, we are turning our attention to the fall semester. What will it look like? Will we be able to welcome all or only some students back to campus? How can we conduct classes while maintaining proper social distancing to ensure everyone's health and protection from the virus? Several teams from across the campus, including faculty, staff and student representatives, have grappled with those questions for the past several months.

With input from a representative cross-section of campus, we have made a decision on the fall semester that I would like to share with you now. The Fall 2020 semester will begin on August 12 and conclude prior to Thanksgiving. The condensed semester will consist of two rigorous seven-week instruction sessions, with students taking two courses in each segment. This adjustment will maximize the learning experience while significantly decreasing the number of individuals each student spends time with on a weekly basis and the number of times students travel home during the semester.

The COVID-19 Pandemic will still be around in the fall, and we need to avoid students traveling home and potentially bringing the virus back to campus. We understand the unique learning

environment that Berea offers and the importance of this community in the success of our students. The health, safety and success of our students, faculty and staff remain our highest priority. Taking those objectives into consideration, earlier today, members of the Administrative Committee voted to invite all students to return to campus for the fall semester. One of our Great Commitments calls us to create a “democratic community.” That decision reflected that commitment. It allows students to make their own best decision during this challenging time.

Those who choose to return to campus must clearly understand that we will not be able to operate in a “business-as-usual” manner. COVID-19 will still be a threat. So, we will be operating with heightened sensitivity to healthy behaviors that everyone on campus must follow strictly. To help us all stay healthy. That means wearing face masks, washing and sanitizing hands frequently, practicing social distancing, and limiting contact with those outside of the campus community.

In the coming days, the AC and other teams will continue discussions on how we implement the process by which you, students, will inform the College of your decision on how you will participate in the Fall semester. And then we will work through the myriad of adjustments that will be related to that decision. We’ll share more details as they are finalized.

For those students who decide against returning to campus, but wish to continue distance learning, we will continue to work with our IS&S team to ensure you have the necessary equipment and Internet access at home to position you for success as you receive instruction throughout the semester.

We recognize that some students may choose to defer enrollment in the fall semester altogether. That is an option. We are gathering information about any possible financial impacts for students who choose a leave of absence and we will share those next week, too, so that students and their families understand all the consequences of the decision they make. There have also been questions about billing and financial aid for students for the fall semester—particularly those students who do not return to campus. We are working with the financial aid office to make those determinations and will convey that as well in the coming days.

Additionally, I can also share that the USA South Conference, our athletic conference, has announced that fall athletics will proceed, but on a modified schedule. The length of the season will have to be diminished in order to conclude before the Thanksgiving break, so seasons will be shortened and the NCAA is allowing a 30 percent reduction in the required competitions to qualify for post-season competitions. The conference has mandated frequent testing of athletes prior to competitions and the College has not yet determined whether it will allow spectators at sporting events. We will make that decision in the coming weeks.

As the fall semester progresses, we will continue to assess how the COVID-19 pandemic is progressing to determine how to approach the Spring 2021 semester.

These are uncertain times and we appreciate your patience as we work through this challenging time together. As has always been the case, our top priority will remain ensuring the health, safety and success of our students, faculty and staff. Beyond implementing temperature checks in the residence halls, and installing hand sanitizer stations throughout campus buildings and offices, we will be working to provide the safest and healthiest work environment we can for our campus community.

As Governor Andy Beshear has promised throughout this pandemic: We will get through this, and we will get through this together.

Thank you.