

MARCH 18, 2020

SUBJECT LINE: Important information regarding Spring Semester schedule

Dear Students and Parents:

The pace of the nation's response to curb the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) has increased exponentially over the last few days. As such, we must all do our part to slow the spread of the coronavirus – or as epidemiologists say, "flatten the curve" – by exercising significant "social distancing," such as avoiding public spaces, eliminating large gatherings of more than 10 people and generally limiting movement.

I write to inform you that as we follow the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and our federal, state and local health officials, Provost **W. Craig Bledsoe** and I, based on the recommendation of Lipscomb's COVID-19 Task Force and in conjunction with the Lipscomb Board of Trustees, **have made the decision to extend online instruction at Lipscomb University for the remainder of the spring semester.** This difficult and unprecedented decision – one being faced by colleges and universities throughout the country – was made with the health, wellbeing and safety of our students, faculty and staff in mind.

With this decision being made, here are some important things students need to know:

- **Remain Home.** As communicated at a White House briefing earlier this week, Americans should not gather in groups of more than 10 people, schooling should be at home and discretionary travel and social visits – including eating at restaurants – should be avoided over the next 15 days. We ask that you make the best decision based on your own health and safety; however, **we strongly encourage students that you not return to campus or to Nashville, as available activities and services are becoming more and more limited.** If you are home for the spring break (which has been extended to include the week of March 23-27) at your permanent residence, you are encouraged to remain there. *If you have returned to Nashville and have the ability to return to your permanent residence, you should seriously consider doing so as soon as practicable.*
- **University Housing.**
 - **Access to residence halls is restricted to a limited number of students – those who have no other option than to be here – through the end of the semester.** If you left the residence halls prior to spring break, please do not return to retrieve your belongings until we establish a safe and orderly process to do this later in the semester. We know this is important to you, and we will have more information in the coming days. We have limited access to many places on campus in order to meet social distancing requirements and to protect the health and safety of those who are still living and working on campus.
 - We have developed the following criteria for students who will be allowed to return to the residence halls for the remainder of the semester:
 - The student's permanent residence is outside of the United States and s/he is unable to travel to their home country.

- The student's academic department has deemed their in-person internship, clinical or practicum will continue and requires their on-site presence and s/he has accepted that arrangement.
- The student has personal circumstances preventing her/him from returning home, some examples include:
 - The student is classified as an independent.
 - The student is part of the foster care system.
 - The student/student's family does not have a permanent address.
 - The student's home community is quarantined and is not allowing open travel to/from that location.
 - Returning to home represents a health/safety threat to the student or those at home.
 - Returning home will prevent the student from accessing their courses remotely because of insufficient internet and technology capabilities.

Again, only the students who meet one or more of these criteria will be able to return to the residence halls this semester. We will make an application form available for such students in the days ahead.

- **Dining Services and Recreational Activities.** Dining options on campus will be significantly limited, primarily to grab-and-go options at one location, and recreational opportunities will be unavailable, including those in the Student Activities Center.
- **Student Services.** We will be sharing more information soon about virtual options for some important student services in the coming days.
- **Lipscomb University Health Center.** Lipscomb University Health Center will be available to students on campus from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. All students requesting services from the Health Center must call 615-966-6304 for triage and scheduling appointments. If you are sick and think that you may have COVID-19, please adhere to our procedure of **calling before you come to the Health Center**. If you are utilizing the Health Center for well visits (including: immunizations, blood draws, TB skin tests, physicals and any other well visit services), you must call the Health Center for an appointment. These appointments will only be available on Tuesdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.
- **Refunds.** We will not have a specific plan or answers related to unused portions of on-campus housing and dining plans for a couple of weeks. We understand this is an important issue and will communicate with impacted students and families in the near future.
- **May Commencement.** With the CDC's guidance that events with 50 or more people should not be held in the United States for the next eight weeks, our **May Commencement will not take place on-campus as planned**. Please know that Lipscomb will still confer degrees in May for those who satisfy their academic requirements. We know this is disappointing to our graduates, their friends and family and faculty who were looking forward to celebrating this day together. We are currently in discussions about how to provide a meaningful moment to celebrate the academic achievements of our undergraduate and graduate students who are on pace to graduate in May. We will share more information about those plans in the near future.
- **University Events.** As a reminder university events are cancelled through the end of the semester. This includes all university activities, events, conferences and large gatherings. As

announced earlier, the ASun Conference has canceled all athletic competitions through the end of the academic year, including spring sports that compete beyond the semester.

- **Academic Advising, Maymester and Summer School.** We know you have a number of questions regarding these topics. We will share information in the next few days about the upcoming academic advising period and over the next few weeks regarding plans for Maymester and Summer School.
- **Student Workers.** We understand this situation may impact student workers who will no longer be on campus for work assignments. However, if you have a position that can be completed remotely and your supervisor has work to assign to you, your supervisor will reach out to you with instructions. We will also continue to monitor the Federal guidelines and how they may be applicable in this situation.
- **Preventive Health Measures.** Please continue to take the [preventive actions as recommended by the CDC](#), including washing your hands, covering coughs with your elbow/sleeve, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, and clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces. Also, please avoid groups and keep a physical distance from others.
- **Updates.** Please visit the COVID-19 [Student Information](#) page on the Lipscomb website often for updates.

I realize this is difficult news to process, and I know it will generate many questions. We pledge to share more information and instructions for you in the days to come, and we will continue to provide updates by email and on our dedicated website lipscomb.edu/COVID19. You can also email questions to covidquestions@lipscomb.edu.

Not long ago I had the opportunity to visit Jackson Hole, Wyoming, where bison are plentiful and winters are harsh. During my stay I happened upon a photo of a beautiful bison standing resiliently in the snow. As I learned more about how bison winter in the backcountry living in the harshest of conditions knowing that spring will come, the photo took on a symbolic meaning for me as we are all part of the Bison Herd at Lipscomb. The bison in that photo was focused on what in front of him, had the tenacity to live in that difficult winter day after day and the confidence to withstand it.

We are Bisons. We are looking straight ahead as we navigate this unknown winter before us. We are tenacious as we take one day at a time in a world we cannot predict. And we are courageous in our journey as we know that spring always comes after even the bleakest of winters. No matter where you are during this winter, you are always part of the Bison Herd and together we will look forward to the spring that *will* come.

Blessings,
Randy Lowry
President