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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

October 21, 2020

Dear Hampton University Community:

I pray that you and your family are remaining healthy and safe as our nation continues to confront the challenges we face due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout this semester, I have been in contact with faculty, staff, and students who have reported that this semester is going well. Both faculty and students are actively engaged in the teaching/learning process and have adjusted to virtual instruction.

Over the past few weeks, the University has been actively monitoring the spread of the virus. Currently, our nation has had over 8.2 million cases and over 220,000 deaths. There have been over 300,000 new cases reported just within the last seven days. Most states are seeing a rise in cases, and only two states have seen decreases. In addition, colleges and universities nationwide have reported over 130,000 cases on their campuses since the pandemic began.

Since the onset of the pandemic, I have made every effort to keep the Hampton University community informed. On October 8, 2020, Dr. Barbara Inman and I conducted a Zoom meeting with student leaders. During the meeting, I provided the students with an overview of some activities on campus, including physical plant improvements along with multi-million dollar upgrades in the academic and student affairs areas. I also asked for the students' input on the mode of operation for spring 2021. Although disappointed that they may be unable to return to campus in the spring, the students agreed that continuing the virtual experience was the best option as it related to their health and safety.

The student leaders also expressed an interest in incorporating an additional break into the semester to help with some of the stressors that they are encountering. Many students have had to take on additional responsibilities like a job, take care of siblings, as well as deal with deaths and illness because of COVID – 19. It was suggested that the spring 2021 semester calendar include an additional break. Another suggestion was to require faculty to record all lectures so students living on the West Coast and outside of the country may be accommodated. I have asked for this to be done.

We, at Hampton, have evaluated the data trends and the current state of affairs as it relates to the pandemic to determine the impact that COVID-19 will likely have on the Hampton community and the associated risks if we resume in-person instruction next semester. With the cases spiking on college and university campuses, including HBCUs, and in a majority of the states, we have determined that it is in the best interest of the entire Hampton University community to continue virtual instruction for the spring 2021

semester. This was a difficult decision to make because we miss our students greatly. We would prefer that all of our lives return to the normalcy we now recognize as "before the pandemic." However, this is not presently possible. We cannot, in good conscious, allow students to return to campus under these current conditions, which might inevitably increase their likelihood of exposure to COVID-19.

Therefore, Hampton University will continue with virtual instruction for the spring 2021 semester. With the above in mind, the spring 2021 semester will follow the approved 2020-2021 University calendar, with classes beginning Monday, January 11, 2021. In addition to the breaks for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Spring Break, I have approved Wellness Breaks for Friday, February 12, 2021 and Friday, April 2, 2021. Though students will not be on the campus with us, we will continue to provide a top-notch education and high quality customer service.

In closing, I want to remind you that our current priorities are the health and safety of the Hampton University community as well as the continuation of the Hampton Experience. Each decision that we make is made with you in mind as we continue our legacy as **THE** Standard of Excellence. Stay safe. Stay strong. Stay positive!

With all good wishes,

/s/ William R. Harvey  
President

WRH:cdq