

## Updates to Students from Vice President for Student Life

April 7, 2020

Students,

Though this is not the Spring semester any of us would have imagined, I am grateful that I've been able to connect with so many of you in different ways. Whether through a phone call, text message, Twitter, Facebook, GroupMe, or running into you while out for a bike ride, I have enjoyed hearing from you about the ups and downs of your unexpected Spring semester. Please feel free to reach out to me as I want to continue hearing from you.

We in Student Life, as well as others on campus, are calling students to check-in. When you receive a phone call from us, please let us know how you are adjusting and how the university can provide support to you during this time. Below is some important information I wanted to make sure you were aware of for the remainder of the semester:

### **81st Annual Easter Pageant**

While we will not have the live performances of the 81st Annual Easter Pageant, please join us on tomorrow at 5:30 p.m. for a virtual Easter Pageant experience as we celebrate the story of Jesus together. Through an online experience, current students, as well as alumni, will share their stories of how Easter Pageant has impacted them while weaving together scenes from past performances. Visit the UMHB Easter Pageant website to see and hear how the Easter Pageant has impacted the lives of our students and alumni. I would like to give special thanks to Precious Anselm, Emma Spelling, Miriam Osterlund, Sarah Weinmann, Seth Blankenship and the rest of the Easter Pageant cast and crew for their innovation in making this such a memorable experience.

## **May Commencement Rescheduled**

Unfortunately, in keeping with the nationwide effort to slow the spread of COVID-19, UMHB's May commencement ceremony will be postponed until December 11. More information will be provided as plans are finalized. UMHB will confer degrees in the Spring as scheduled to those who satisfy their academic requirements. Diplomas will be mailed to graduates.

We recognize that this decision will be a disappointment for the many graduates who had planned to walk next month. Graduation is never a solo accomplishment and commencement represents a celebration for the entire family. We share the disappointment of students that we will need to wait until December to celebrate together.

## **Counseling Service and Online Resources**

While this has been a stressful and unnerving time for us all, the Counseling Center provides helpful videos on topics such as dealing with uncertainty and feelings of isolation. Videos and other free resources can be found on the Counseling Center website. Due to UMHB's decision to shift to an online learning model for the remainder of the Spring semester, Counseling Services will also be shifting our service model. At this time, Counseling Services is available for tele-therapy. Students are invited to contact Counseling Services at (254) 295-4696 during business hours (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) or email [kbutterworth@umhb.edu](mailto:kbutterworth@umhb.edu) if you would like to schedule a time to speak to a counselor.

## **Student Government Association**

The Student Government Association continues to meet online weekly as they charter new organizations and discuss student concerns. If you'd like to visit with an SGA representative about a particular idea of how to enhanced the student experience, visit the SGA website, SGA Facebook page, or attend a virtual meeting on Tuesdays at 4:00 p.m. (information can be found on the UMHB SGA Facebook page).

Finally, as was inevitable, I want to let you know that COVID-19 is beginning to affect our UMHB family. Although there are no reported cases among those still on campus, we are beginning to receive information from a few off-campus students that they and/or members of their families have COVID-19. If you, or your family members, are

dealing with COVID-19, please let me know so UMHB can provide you with support and prayer.

I know this global pandemic has put a great deal of pressure on all of us, and I am proud of each of you. I continue to keep you all in my thoughts and prayers as we, together, navigate this crisis and support one another in all ways possible. Our God is in control, even in these challenging and uncertain circumstances.

Blessings,

Dr. Brandon Skaggs, Vice President for Student Life