

Letter to the UMHB Community

March 24, 2020

Yesterday afternoon Bell County issued a “Stay Home Stay Safe” directive, which became effective at 11:59 p.m. on March 23 through 11:59 p.m. on Friday, April 3. The directive calls for the residents of Bell County to shelter at their places of residence to prevent and slow down the spread of COVID-19.

Our hope has been to reunite with our students in person on April 6. However, with the continuing pandemic challenges nationwide and with this most recent directive by our local health officials, bringing students back to campus for face-to-face instruction is now unlikely. We also recognize that it would be even more disruptive for our students and faculty to transition back to face-to-face instruction in the final days of the semester.

With this in mind, we are announcing the following decisions for the remainder of the Spring semester:

Academic Coursework

UMHB will continue providing instruction through online learning for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester.

Students are advised to check myCourses and their UMHB email frequently for communications from their professors. Students should contact course instructors sooner rather than later for assistance or support with online classes. They will be happy to assist.

Student Access to Technology

Townsend Memorial Library will provide computer access, but only for UMHB students who remain in campus housing. The computer lab in the library will be accessible Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Access to the computer lab will be limited to numbers of 10 or less, including library staff.

Any UMHB student who does not have access to a computer or the Internet should immediately call the Center for Academic Excellence at (254) 295-4475 for assistance.

Grading System Changes

In order to provide support and flexibility for our students during this challenging time, the Faculty Council at UMHB has unanimously recommended that students should have the option to change their undergraduate courses to Credit/No Credit or to remain under the traditional A, B, C, D, F grading system for the Spring 2020 semester. The Provost has approved this change, and the grading process for most majors at the undergraduate level will be automatically moved to Credit/No Credit for the Spring 2020 semester. Students may elect to move back to the traditional letter grading system if they choose.

Exceptions are the undergraduate pre-professional health programs (Nursing, Pre-Health Professions, and EXSS Health Science). Students in these programs will remain in their current letter grading system and will be contacted soon by their program advisors for details on their specific grading options.

The Credit/No Credit grading system may not be in every student's best interest. More details regarding changes to the grading system can be found [here](#).

Academic Support

UMHB will continue to offer academic support, including academic coaching, tutoring and advising. Contact your academic advisor with any questions.

Chapel and Fine Arts Experience (FAE) Credits

The University is committed to providing meaningful Chapel and Fine Arts Experiences for Spring 2020 through an online format. Students enrolled in these courses were recently sent specific information by email. Please check myCourses for additional information.

Student Housing

Student Housing will remain closed through the end of the Spring 2020 semester except to a limited number of residential students who have a hardship preventing them from returning home at this time.

- Retrieving personal items – Students should not return to campus to retrieve their belongings at this time. All personal items are secure and locked in campus housing.
- Move out – UMHB is working on a safe and orderly plan for students to sign up for a move out date and time. Resident Directors will be in contact with students to schedule a time to move out, as soon as allowed by local health authorities. Vehicles may remain on campus until move out occurs.

Room and Board Refunds

UMHB will provide a prorated refund for the period of time room and board were unavailable, in accordance with financial aid practices. For students who did not return to housing during campus closure, the refund is for an 8-week period (March 16 – May 9) of the 17-week Spring room and board term. If the housing adjustment results in a credit balance on the student account, the student will be provided the option to receive a cash refund or maintain the credit to apply toward a future semester bill. Thank you for your patience as UMHB works through this process, which should be completed within the next 45 days.

Access to Buildings and Services

Buildings on campus will be locked 24/7 but will maintain card access for employees who are authorized to return to campus at any time during this period. The following buildings will be accessible to authorized employees and students by card access only:

- 1845 Grill in Bawcom Student Union: Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Mabee Market in the Mabee Student Success Center: Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Saturday to Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Mail Services

The UMHB Post Office will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday for authorized department representatives and students living on campus. Mail

delivery and pick-up to individual campus buildings has been suspended until further notice.

Student Counseling and Chaplain Services

The Student Counseling Center will serve students remotely for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester. Appointments can be scheduled at (254) 295-4696 and kbutterworth@umhb.edu. The University Chaplain is available at (254) 295-4698 and jbpalmer@umhb.edu.

Commencement

We are proud of our students who will be graduating soon. At this time, no decision has been made about Spring 2020 Commencement; the University will post information about the ceremony as it becomes available. Degrees will be conferred as scheduled.

Events and Activities

For the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester, all University events and activities have been cancelled, postponed, or moved online.

Travel

University-sponsored domestic and international air travel has been suspended until further notice.

Employees

Except for key personnel assigned to work on campus during this shelter-in-place period, UMHB employees will continue to work remotely until further notice unless their supervisor has notified them that their presence on campus is essential.

Contacting the University

For the duration of the “Stay Home Stay Safe” directive, University communications will be maintained by telephone, email, and the University website. Calls to the

University switchboard at (254) 295-8642 will be answered and routed to personnel who can respond to callers' questions.

Advising and Registration for Summer and Fall 2020

Students recently received information about advising for Fall 2020. Registration for the Fall semester will open on April 13, as scheduled. As a reminder, Summer 2020 registration remains open.

Cru Camp (for incoming freshmen), scheduled for April 25, will operate by alternative methods. We are excited to welcome the Fall 2020 freshman class; advisors will be in contact soon.

Admissions and Campus Visits

UMHB continues to accept applications for admission as usual. Campus visits are closed at this time. To continue to offer a visitor experience, a new campus virtual tour will be available soon. We are ready to serve you and look forward to talking with you soon.

In the midst of this rapidly changing environment, UMHB remains committed to providing the best in Christian higher education for our students. Thank you for your patience as we make these adjustments to protect the health and safety of all members of the UMHB community. We will continue to share information and updates by email and through the University website at www.umhb.edu.

I miss seeing all of you, and I know it will be a glorious day when we are reunited on campus again. I continue to pray for you and your families. Remember, our God is in control, even in these challenging and uncertain circumstances.

Go Cru!

Randy O'Rear, President