



BETHUNE-COOKMAN UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1904 by Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune

E. LaBrent Chrite, Ph.D., President

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 1, 2021

Dear Wildcats:

Happy New Year! I hope you and your loved ones had a joyous and safe holiday break. From the onset of the pandemic, our primary commitment has been to maintain the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff while fulfilling our teaching and learning obligations. COVID-19, this unpredictable and unforeseen event of our time, has tested and revealed our collective resilience like nothing before it. B-CU has effectively navigated the tumult of 2020 by focusing on our North Star – protecting the safety, well-being and health of our students. It is for this reason that the University has made the decision to **delay the in-person start of spring semester until February 15, 2021. All courses will begin on-line on January 11, 2021.**

We are taking this action because COVID-19 positivity rates in the state of Florida and across much of the US are dangerously high. They are expected to increase to higher rates in early to mid-January. These factors, combined with the onset of a new variant – now detected in Florida – along with the uncertainties associated with the virus provide more questions than answers. In light of these factors and out of an abundance of caution, we have no alternative but to postpone the return to campus. With a dangerous contagion that is yet to peak, I believe that another course of action would be less than fully responsible.

I know this decision causes distress, concern and inconvenience. This is not how we had hoped to start the new year. We want our students back on campus and we know they want to be back here, under safe conditions. I appreciate that the timing of this decision comes during heightened optimism about global vaccine efforts. Our priority as a University is to get through these next few months of winter without compromising, in any way, the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff.

We recognize and understand that migrating to a remote learning environment is far from ideal for our community. However, we've also shown that we're capable of getting through this. We will continue to work with faculty and staff to ensure that they have all the tools they need to support our students during this final push through the pandemic. Students can plan to start their classes online beginning **January 11th** and arrive back on campus on **February 11th, 12th and 13th, 2021**. There will be **no spring break this semester and we will adjust the academic calendar as necessary**. All students will be tested for the virus when they return and we will again be maintaining strict standards on distancing and personal safety protocols.

We will be sending additional information over the coming days and weeks via email, the campus website and other digital media. In the meantime, stay safe, God Bless you and Hail Wildcats.

Sincerely,

E. LaBrent Chrite

Sustaining a Legacy of Faith, Scholarship, and Service

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