

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: REMAINDER OF SPRING SEMESTER MOVED ONLINE

March 19, 2020

Dear SBU family:

Due to continued developments in the COVID-19 outbreak within the United States, Southwest Baptist University will move all course delivery online for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester. Spring Break has been extended through March 23-27 to provide additional time for our faculty and staff to prepare alternative instructional and support strategies. Courses will resume online on March 30, and the semester will end on May 15 as originally scheduled.

As a husband, father, son, and higher education leader, this crisis has affected every area of my life, too. While we know this decision is disruptive and disappointing for us all, we must implement extraordinary and temporary measures for the wellness of our SBU community and broader communities we are proud to serve. Everyone within our SBU family, from students to employees, is feeling an extra level of uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 and our collective response to this outbreak. I am, however, certain we have to do things differently in the coming weeks.

For students

- Continue to maintain good communication with your professors and instructors through Blackboard, MySBU, and other communication mediums being utilized for your courses.
- Residence halls will be closed, with minimal exceptions for students who were unable to return home or secure housing elsewhere.
- In accordance with guidance from local authorities regarding limitations on group sizes, we are working on a plan for students to retrieve their personal belongings from the residence halls. **YOU MAY NOT return to campus now.** More information will be released Wednesday, March 25.
- For all academic programs with clinical and other off-campus experience requirements, please refer to the website for the most up-to-date information.
- We are working to determine the financial aspects for our students and will provide information as soon as it is available.
- Advisors will be contacting students who still need to register for Summer and Fall 2020 courses.
- There will be no campus employment (work-study, graduate assistants and other student workers) the week of March 23. Information pertaining to campus employment for the remaining of the semester will be provided Wednesday, March 25.
- Contact the ITS Help Desk at (417) 328-1702 or helpdesk@SBUuniv.edu if you are having issues connecting to SBU resources such as MySBU and Blackboard.
- Students who do not have technology available for online course delivery should contact their professors.

For faculty and staff

- Staff members should stay home on Monday, March 23, and wait for information from supervisors regarding the rest of the week. You will be paid for this day. If you need to be in the office on Monday, March 23, you will be contacted by your supervisors on Friday, March 20.
- Faculty should follow guidance provided by the Provost's Office posted on the MySBU portal on Thursday, March 19.

Campus events

- All campus events for the remainder of the semester have been cancelled.
- May commencement ceremonies have been postponed. We want to celebrate your accomplishments and will provide more information as soon as it is available.

For more-specific information, read the Frequently Asked Questions at [SBUUniv.edu/coronavirus](https://www.sbu.edu/coronavirus).

Students already are telling us they miss being at SBU—be assured, we miss you too. We remain committed to helping you pursue academic, social and spiritual growth through your SBU education. We are exploring unique ways to engage our campus communities while we are not together on our campuses.

Seniors are missing out on some “lasts” of their college experience. Many student-athletes have lost an entire season — the senior season for some. I do not like this impact any more than you do. There are no substitutes for the top-drawer, in-person instruction, and residential experiences SBU provides.

Thank you to everyone for your agility and patience as we work through these unexpected times together. Continue to monitor our website at [SBUUniv.edu/coronavirus](https://www.sbu.edu/coronavirus), social media channels, MySBU portal and your SBU email address for continuing updates as more information becomes available. If you have trouble accessing these resources, send an email to helpdesk@sbu.edu.

Throughout our 142-year history, the University has faced daunting problems and concerns, yet time and again, we have proven ourselves to be resilient and kept our focus and faith in our Lord.

The Verse of the Week shared on SBU’s social media this week is 2 Timothy 1:7, “For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” I urge you to put your trust in the Lord and refrain from living with a spirit of fear, but rather with a spirit of love. Be a servant leader wherever you are. Alongside completing your coursework or work obligations, look for opportunities to love your neighbors, share the Gospel, and make an impact in your local community. Now is your time to shine, Bearcats, and be a light to the world.

Please take care of yourself and each other. We love you, and can hardly wait to see you again on one of our campuses.

Shaping our story together,

Dr. Eric A. Turner
SBU President