

# A BRAVE START

FALL 2020

START DATE | AUGUST 17, 2020



V2: 08/04/2020

For more information, please visit [www.alcorn.edu/abravestart](http://www.alcorn.edu/abravestart)



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# A BRAVE START

## FALL 2020 START DATE | AUGUST 17, 2020

The Alcorn community is coming home this fall! The way we interact will look different, but we are still one family – one Brave family working together every day to adopt a new normal on the campus we love.

Alcorn leadership has considered – and will continue to evaluate and adjust – every safe pathway for our community to engage in beloved traditions. In true Alcorn fashion, our team has remained focused on ambitious goals and continued improvement while staying endlessly positive. With safety and success at the forefront of the conversation, we are excited and hopeful for what's to come!

Students, faculty, and staff should re-enter campus with open minds, consideration for one another, and that same Brave spirit that has always made Alcorn truly special.

We will see you soon for A BRAVE START into the 2020-2021 school year!



**Alcorn**  
State University

### KEY DATES

#### **AUGUST 11 & 12**

Student Virtual Orientations

#### **AUGUST 17**

Classes Being – Virtual

#### **SEPTEMBER 7**

Labor Day

#### **SEPTEMBER 9**

In-Person Instruction Begins

#### **OCTOBER 5-9**

Midterm Week

#### **NOVEMBER 24**

Traditional/Hybrid Fall Courses End

#### **DECEMBER 2-4**

Final Exams

#### **DECEMBER 11**

Fall Semester Ends

Degrees Conferred (Effective 12/11/20)

#### **JANUARY 11, 2021**

Spring 2021 Semester Begins

*All dates subject to change*

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Alcorn State University Family,

Thank you for your patience and continued support as we have worked through the development of a comprehensive plan that will serve to guide our efforts to resume in-person classes for the Fall 2020 semester. It will truly be *A Brave Start*. We continue to monitor the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic in the local community, the state, and the nation. Although we cannot eliminate all risk associated with the virus, we are working tirelessly to design plans and take the necessary actions to mitigate risks to our Alcorn community.



I understand that there is a lot of uncertainty and fear among our students, faculty, staff, and parents. I too share in your concerns. There is so much about this situation that is beyond anyone's control. Hence, it is vitally important that beyond what we are able to do in this plan, that we all behave as responsible citizens that are part of a bigger community. That means – Mask Up, Avoid Large Gatherings, Monitor Systems, Social Distance, and Practice Good Hand Hygiene.



Since the inception of the COVID-19 global pandemic, our guiding principles have centered around devising a structured approach that would, to the extent possible, find the critical balance between protecting the health and safety of our ASU family while simultaneously maintaining the academic integrity of the educational experience that our students expect and deserve.

During the May Board meeting, the Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions

of Higher Learning passed a resolution stating the board's intention that all public universities make plans to resume traditional operations on their campus the Fall 2020 Semester. We will comply with the directive and have been continuously working to support the safest return possible.

The "A Brave Start" represents the University's guide for campus preparation to start the semester. The document was constructed with broad input and robust discussions and recommendations from the ASU Safe Start Task Force, COVID-19 Task Force, Executive Leadership, community leaders, and in accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Mississippi Department of Health, Dr. Thomas Dobbs, the federal government and others. Additionally, the planning team lead by the Interim Provost, Dr. Keith McGee and co-chaired by Mrs. Dorothy Davis, Director of Health and Disability Services and featuring representation from the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government Association, Student Affairs, Human Resources, Residential Life, Emergency Management, Alumni, sought input from deans, directors, department heads, students, faculty and others.

As we move toward the start of the semester and into the semester, I am asking for your understanding, patience, and flexibility. The future will continue to be filled with many unknowns that make static decision making challenging. We will do all we can to make changes quickly, with prudence and notify you more timely.

I want to personally thank all those who have worked countless hours, day and night, to keep our campus operational and to contribute to the COVID-19 fight through our knowledge and research, and to systematically plan for how *we move forward together*.

**Felecia M. Nave**

President, Alcorn State University

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The safety, health, and well-being of Alcorn State University's students, faculty, staff and the broader community are paramount. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, President Felecia M. Nave established the ASU Safe Start Task Force, co-chaired by the University's Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Keith A. McGee and Mrs. Dorothy Davis, Director of Health and Disability Services. President Nave charged the committee with developing a comprehensive protocol that would support a safe and effective campus restart for Fall 2020.

*A Brave Start* is an operational guide that captures the collective input of the campus community. The campus restart plan was developed with a shared governance approach by way of subcommittees made up of faculty, staff, students, and healthcare professionals. The following subcommittees were established in order to assist the co-chairs with the University's restart plans: Academic Continuity, Finance and Business Operations, Health and Safety, Communications, Campus Life, Research Continuity, and Athletics. The subcommittees reviewed a series of questions developed by the committee and analyzed various reports, external articles as well as state, local and national data to help inform their recommendations to the President and the Executive Leadership.

On July 1, 2020, all employees returned to campus to facilitate the activities required to prepare for the return of students. Alcorn aims to open campus for instruction, through both face-to-face and online delivery. Our goal is to ensure the academic integrity of our degree programs and continue to provide a high-quality educational experience inside and outside of the classroom. **This is a shared responsibility.** The University understands that these dates and plans are fluid as we collectively monitor the COVID-19 situation while continuing to follow all state and federal guidance. The *A Brave Start* plan articulates how we anticipate realizing this goal.

Residential students will return to campus in stages. Both new and returning students will move into campus by scheduled appointments in the week leading up to the start of classes. Continue to monitor the [Student Housing webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information. We have set aside a designated number of rooms to serve as quarantine/isolation location for students who may test positive for COVID-19. Additionally, policies have been updated in the [Student Code of Conduct Handbook](#) that address our new living and learning environment. These policies include but are not limited to prohibiting loitering in residential spaces, limiting visitation, and restricting social gathering activities.

**We strongly encourage all students to self-isolate for two weeks before returning to campus.** Once on campus, those who test positive will be quarantined at their personal home or in designated residence hall facilities on campus. Contact tracing of those testing positive will be done by the Health Service Center. We are exploring the purchase of a contact tracing platform (i.e. Everbridge SAFETY CONNECTIONS) to assist in these efforts.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Face coverings and social distancing will be required in all indoor spaces (except bedrooms) with more than one individual and in outdoor spaces in accordance with state and MSDH guidelines. We will monitor the health environment of the campus with a daily self-screening tool that will allow for quick, effective response. Hand sanitizers and other disinfecting tools will be distributed throughout the main campus as well as the Natchez and Vicksburg campuses.

The academic calendar has been modified with a start date of August 17, 2020. After Thanksgiving, we will move to distance delivery of all final exams. We are acquiring several instructional and academic support technologies including but not limited to Zoom and Microsoft Teams to support video communications, Respondus which includes Lockdown Browser, quiz and testing support and proctoring services, Upswing virtual assistant provides coaching, online tutoring, etc. among others in support of this new teaching and learning environment. We are also exploring implementation of a laptop policy for all students.

In order to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission among communities, travel related to Alcorn business or academic programs will be limited. Out-of-state and international travel will continue to be suspended. Residential students will be allowed to remain on campus during Labor Day and encouraged not to travel on weekends.

We are in continuous dialogue internally and externally to determine the number of positive confirmations of COVID-19 at one time that would trigger a thorough review of whether ASU can safely continue to offer face-to-face instruction. We may consider alternative thresholds and implement additional protective measures as we monitor the health environments of the campus and the local Alcorn community.

In conclusion, we must all commit to maintaining the health and safety of the Alcorn community, our families, and our neighbors. We are excited to welcome people back to campus this Fall, but participating in on-campus activities will require complying with new policies and protocols. As our plan for the Fall semester continues to evolve, we will continue to update faculty, staff, students, families, and community partners. Please continue to monitor regularly [www.alcorn.edu/abravestart](http://www.alcorn.edu/abravestart) for updates.

## MS IHL BOARD RESTART GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Commissioner of Higher Education Dr. Alfred Rankins Jr. established the Safe Start Task Force for the Mississippi public university system. The task force was charged with crafting a system-level plan for starting and completing the fall 2020 semester in the safest and most effective way, so that students and universities can achieve the best possible outcomes, regardless of the challenging circumstances. Dr. Keith A. McGee, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Mrs. Dorothy Davis, Director of Health and Disability Services served as representatives for Alcorn State University.



"The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented disruption to all facets of our society and university operations are not excluded," said Dr. Rankins. "Regardless of the challenges, our universities are committed to providing the best and safest educational experience possible for their students and the most productive and safest work environment for their employees. To achieve this goal, key leaders from each of the eight universities will provide valuable input through the task force."

This pandemic continues to be a very fluid situation; thus, the recommendations from the task force are best available thought as of the submission date. Adjustments will continually be required due to the constantly evolving situation. The full document with baseline practices and recommendations can be accessed on the [Mississippi Public University System Guidance for University COVID-19 Action Plans](#) page.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR A BRAVE START

### **Alcorn State University Guiding Principles for A Brave Start**

As the University plans for the Fall 2020 semester, we are faced with a number of challenges: a global pandemic and growing social and political unrest nationwide. Alcorn State University continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and support efforts to help flatten the curve of the rate of infection while maintaining services required to deliver an exceptional education to our students, and conduct critical research in the safest manner possible.



A Brave Start articulates the operational plans that will be used to inform and guide our efforts in welcoming students back to campus for in-person instruction. We've attempted to be inclusive and comprehensive in our approach and capture the collective voices of our constituents. A series of town hall meetings will be scheduled to further discuss the plan with our constituents and field questions and concerns. Additionally, a series of surveys will be available to collect additional comments and recommendations from the broader community.

This document was framed around the following guiding principles:

- Alcorn will continue to deliver an exceptional, high-quality education and provide optimal services, within the unavoidable constraints of the COVID-19 response. Academic Integrity [The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges](#)
- Alcorn will be guided by considerations for the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and community. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and [Mississippi State Department of Health](#)
- Alcorn will make evidence-based decisions driven by the data available at the time.
- Alcorn will provide continuous communications as decisions are made and changes to the plans are determined. [ASU Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Updates](#) and [A Brave Start](#)
- Alcorn will comply with all directives and work in consultation with [IHL](#) in establishing safe start protocols.

The COVID-19 situation is a fluid and rapidly evolving set of events. We recognize there are no right or perfect approaches only those which allow us to mitigate exposure and minimize spread. We understand that the community is concerned and anxious and we are as well. We also understand that there are some members of the community who do not feel comfortable engaging in the face-to-face environment for various reasons. We acknowledge your concerns and will work with our students, faculty, and staff as best we can, given these unprecedented circumstances.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR A BRAVE START

It is important that all individuals at the University understand their responsibility for personal health as well as protecting other members of the campus community. It is critical that everyone model behaviors of a good citizen and follow all guidelines in our efforts to keep the Alcorn family safe.



## PREVENTION MEASURES AND RISK MITIGATION

Alcorn State University plans to return to full campus operations and in-person instruction on August 17, 2020. To do so, we have developed a set of guidelines that promotes safe and healthy operations as well as mitigates risks of COVID-19 infection and spread among our students and employees. At this stage of the pandemic, we are all aware of the importance of taking personal responsibility for our own health AND understanding how our actions affect the health of our community. The Prevention Measures and Minimizing Risks components of the plan are outlined in this section.



### Personal and Public Hygiene

1. Personal hygiene habits are critical to the safety of all on campus, and the immediate University community, specifically (no shaking hands, hugging, all individuals will wash hands often, etc.).
2. Face coverings are **REQUIRED** for all students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors unless exempted with documentation by a medical professional. Documentation must be logged with [Human Resources](#) (faculty and staff) OR [Health Services](#) (students).
  - a. This guidance is subject to change in accordance with guidance from medical professionals and the CDC
  - b. Face coverings must be worn in classrooms, labs, all interior spaces and shared office spaces regardless of physical distance.
  - c. Alcorn will provide, as needed, reusable and disposable masks but encourage the personal purchase of face coverings.
  - d. Face coverings are not required in individual residence hall rooms, public outdoor settings, enclosed office spaces, and dining facilities when eating.
3. All students and employees are **REQUIRED** to remain home if sick or exhibiting symptoms of or have COVID-19.
4. Facilities and Maintenance staff will be continuously trained on enhanced cleaning and sanitization procedures. Additionally, third party custodial service vendors will be hired to assist the University in deep cleaning and sanitizing of facilities. Facilities will be cleaned in the overnight hours.
5. All public spaces will be regularly cleaned and disinfected frequently.
6. High-touch surface areas (doorknobs, handrails, light switches) will be regularly cleaned and disinfected.

## PREVENTION MEASURES AND RISK MITIGATION

7. Hand sanitizing stations will be positioned at major entrances to campus buildings and high-traffic locations.
8. High-touch shared items such as paper, pens, etc. will be removed when possible and additional high-touch areas will be identified to determine a reduced touch usage plan (for example, minimizing the passing to others of student identification cards).
9. Employees should clean and sanitize their personal workspace. Sanitizing spray and/or wipes will be made available to each department. Classrooms will be outfitted with additional cleaning supplies that can be used by students and/or faculty members who desire to clean their individual spaces before class periods.
10. Deep cleaning and sanitizing of offices and rooms will take place when persons test positive.



### **Social Distancing**

1. Social distancing policies will follow the CDC guidelines to the extent practicable.
2. Students, faculty, staff, and visitors should follow all social distancing guidelines in both academic and campus life, to the greatest extent practicable.
3. Training and educational reminders on correct social distancing guidelines will be ongoing.
4. Facilities Management (FM) will work with all units on campus to add floor markings, Plexiglas coverings, and signage on doorways, entrances, elevators, lobbies, one-way traffic in halls, and other items to facilitate social distancing guidelines.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Prevention Measures**

1. All units will be asked to determine and report their ongoing needs for and supply of PPE and hand sanitizer to the Procurement Services Office.
2. Instructions will be provided to the campus regarding the procedure to request PPE.
3. ASU is working with vendors on developing online training for students, faculty, and staff on proper social distancing, use of PPE and other safety and health measures.

## PREVENTION MEASURES AND RISK MITIGATION

4. PPE will be provided to employees in public-facing work areas/stations, such as the Clinton Bristow Jr. dining areas, residence halls, ASU Campus Bookstore, J.D. Boyd Library, James L. Bolden Union, Post Office, among others.
5. Posters, informational cards, and other items will be posted throughout campus, including residence hall room and classroom, and in prominent locations in buildings, as well as pop up signs near walking and cycling zone, as well campus e-signage.
6. Custodial staff at on the Natchez and Vicksburg campuses will work with Facilities Management to implement appropriate services for their respective sites.



### **Signage and Education**

1. Signage providing instructions on enhanced safety and health measures will be deployed across campus. Floor markings will be used where needed to indicate proper physical distancing and flow of traffic in dining facilities, residence halls, and other points of ingress and egress.
2. A comprehensive health campaign aimed at students is under development and will be deployed this summer and into the fall semester. All students, faculty, and staff will complete an online module related to COVID-19 spread reduction techniques.

### **Returning from International Travel**

In accordance with the current guidance of the CDC, all employees and students returning to campus from any international location must self-quarantine for 14 days.

### **Temperature Monitoring**

1. Thermometers will be provided to students, faculty, and staff as part of a PPE kit distributed by the University. Temperature self-check will be required daily prior to reporting to work or attending classes. We are exploring the purchase of software platform that supports tracking and monitoring of symptom checks as well as purchase of Temperature Testing Kiosks.

## PREVENTION MEASURES AND RISK MITIGATION

2. Temperatures will be checked at the main entrance and back entrance for students, employees, and visitors every time campus is entered.
3. If any individuals register a high temperature, as defined by CDC, they will be advised to stay home or in their residence hall room, and contact [ASU Health Services](#) and immediate supervisor, [Human Resources](#).
4. All applicable leave policies for faculty and staff and class attendance policies for students will continue to apply.



### Testing and Isolation

1. Individuals are advised to visit Alcorn State Health Services for potential testing if they have any of the CDC-listed COVID-19 symptoms.
2. We will NOT test all students, faculty, or staff upon re-entry to the campus.
3. Symptomatic students awaiting test results for COVID-19 will be required to quarantine and self-isolate in their personal home and/or residence hall or in another designated area until test results are determined. The dorm space of the infected student will be cleaned and sanitized immediately.
4. Symptomatic faculty and staff awaiting test results for COVID-19 will be sent home immediately until test results are determined. The supervisor will be notified by the Director of Health and Disability Services or the Director for Human Resources. Human Resources will inform the employee of their leave options and benefits. The office space of the infected employee will be cleaned and sanitized immediately.
5. Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 will be required to quarantine for 14 days at home or in a designated location, in compliance with all state and national guidelines and report results to the [Health Services Center](#).
6. Alcorn will purchase a limited number of test kits for campus use.
7. The Director for Health and Disability Services will coordinate with local and regional medical facilities to support the campus community.

PREVENTION MEASURES AND RISK MITIGATION

**COVID-19 Exposure Guidelines**

Symptoms of COVID-19	Developed COVID-19 symptoms	Direct contact with a person COVID-19 positive	Indirect contact with a person COVID-19 positive	Tested positive for COVID-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Chills</li> <li>• Cough</li> <li>• Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Muscle or body aches</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• New loss of taste or smell</li> <li>• Sore throat</li> <li>• Congestion or runny nose</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Diarrhea</li> </ul> <p>Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.</p> <p>Symptoms may range from mild to severe illness</p> <p>If case of emergency, call Campus Dispatch at 601-877-3000 or dial 911</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact healthcare provider for instructions on possible testing</li> <li>• Self-isolate while awaiting test results</li> <li>• Complete <a href="#">ASU Self-Report Portal form</a>**</li> <li>• If results negative, may return to normal activities 72 hours after symptoms resolve</li> <li>• If results positive, follow COVID-19 positive guidelines</li> <li>• Follow CDC safety precautions, practice social distancing, wear face coverings, clean and disinfect, hand washing, use of hand sanitizer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-quarantine for 14 days after exposure* based on the time it takes to develop illness</li> <li>• Complete <a href="#">ASU Self-Report Portal form</a>**</li> <li>• Self-monitor for symptoms</li> <li>• Check temperature twice daily</li> <li>• Contact healthcare provider for instructions on possible testing</li> <li>• Follow CDC safety precautions, practice social distancing, wear face coverings, clean and disinfect, hand washing, use of hand sanitizer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-monitor for symptoms</li> <li>• Check temperature twice daily</li> <li>• May continue to work or attend class</li> <li>• Follow CDC safety precautions, practice social distancing, wear face coverings, clean and disinfect, hand washing, use of hand sanitizer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-isolation for 10-14 days* or until released by healthcare provider</li> <li>• Complete <a href="#">ASU Self-Report Portal form</a>**</li> <li>• Self-monitor for symptoms</li> <li>• Check temperature twice daily</li> <li>• If symptomatic, must be symptom free for the last 72 hours of the isolation period</li> <li>• Follow CDC safety precautions, practice social distancing, wear face coverings, clean and disinfect, hand washing, use of hand sanitizer</li> </ul> <p>Will follow most recent CDC and MSDH guidelines</p>

\*Note that it is possible that a person known to be infected could leave isolation earlier than a person who is quarantined because of the possibility they are infected.  
 \*\*It is mandatory to complete the [Alcorn State University Self-Report Portal Form](#). This will activate active monitoring by university personnel.

## PREVENTION MEASURES AND RISK MITIGATION

### Contact Tracing

1. The University will abide by contact tracing measures identified by the Mississippi State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
2. COVID-19 positive results will be immediately reported to the Mississippi Department of Health.
3. Alcorn is exploring deploying a contact tracking and notification platform. This will be vital to our ability to reliably and quickly provide information to our health professionals.



### Vaccinations

1. The University will communicate frequently with all students, faculty, and staff regarding the importance of receiving a flu vaccine annually.
2. Flu vaccinations will be available on campus on a first come first serve basis with priority given to students.
3. The flu-shot initiative will take place in early fall 2020.

### Mental Health & Well-Being

1. The mental health and well-being of students, faculty, and staff will be emphasized even more on campus for fall 2020.
2. The University will provide mental health counseling and tele-counseling mental health options through the [University's Counseling Services](#).
3. The University, through our Human Resource department, is researching acquiring services through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for faculty and staff.

PREVENTION MEASURES AND RISK MITIGATION

**Screening**

1. Screenings are non-intrusive health checks that will include temperature checks and self-reported health questionnaires based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Mississippi State Department of Health Suggestions.



**COVID-19 Questionnaire**

It is extremely important that you disclose any pertinent information regarding symptoms related to COVID-19 or any possible exposure to COVID-19

	Yes	No
Do you have a fever greater than 100.4°?		
Are you experiencing difficulty breathing or shortness of breath?		
Are you experiencing body aches, muscle aches, or headaches?		
Are you experiencing fatigue?		
Are you experiencing chills?		
Are you experiencing a cough?		
Are you experiencing nasal congestion or runny nose?		
Are you experiencing sore throat?		
Have you lost your sense of taste or smell?		
Are you experiencing nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea?		
Have you been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19?		
Have you tested for COVID-19?		
If so, were your results positive?		
Have you traveled outside of the United States by air or cruise ship within the past 14 days?		
Have you traveled within the United States by air, bus, or train within the past 14 days?		

2. With the purchase of the contact tracing platform, we will be able to track each person’s daily recordings.

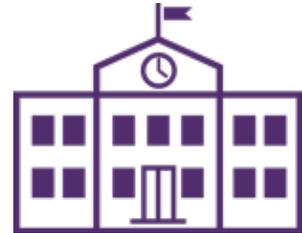
## PREVENTION MEASURES AND RISK MITIGATION

3. All residential and non-residential students will be required to complete a temperature screening every 24 hours along with the self-reported health questionnaire. Once installed, all students will be required to use the contact tracing platform.
4. All employees will be required to conduct a self-screening daily; this should be done prior to coming to work. This should include an "at home" temperature check and a review of potential symptoms of COVID-19 including cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, and a new loss of taste or smell.
5. If an employee has any of these symptoms or a fever of greater than 100.4 degrees, the employee should stay at home and may take leave medical or personal leave unless the employee is able to telework and has an agreement on file. Guidance regarding this leave is available on the HRM website.



## ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH CONTINUITY

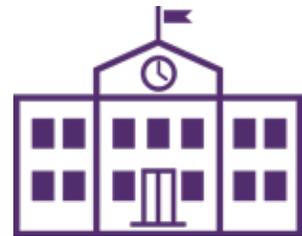
Alcorn State University has dedicated classroom spaces, computer labs, auditoriums, and conference rooms across the main campus, Natchez, and Vicksburg site that can be converted to academic spaces with minor to extensive modification. Various parameters are being assessed, such as air handling, lighting, biological and ecological issues that could rule some spaces out as conducive to student learning.



1. Students, faculty, and staff are **REQUIRED** to wear a face mask in the classroom, unless exempted with documentation by a medical professional.
2. Disposable masks will be available in a designated main office for every building, in the event, someone shows up to class without a face covering.
3. The Office of the Provost, has proposed an adjustment to the 2020 Academic Calendar
4. The mode of course delivery will be Face to Face (FTF) as mandated by IHL. However, a combination of in-person, hybrid (a mixture of both in-person and online delivery), Digital Off Ramp model and online instruction will be available to any student should they contract or be suspected of contracted COVID-19, while maintaining a new normal, traditional, on-campus experience for fall 2020.
5. Faculty will be asked to create course delivery contingency plans that could be implemented at any time throughout the academic year in response to the fluidity of the COVID-19 situation.
6. The examination of classroom and laboratory spaces throughout all sections of campus will continue to occur.
7. Research and non-classroom instructional spaces may be used to continue research and individuals may study in the space as long as work areas are distanced in accordance with CDC guidelines, with PPE worn where practicable.
8. The Office of the Provost is developing a common course syllabus that will include the *A Brave Start Guidelines* that will be required for all faculty to use.
9. Faculty will continue to afford that any student who is disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 will not be left behind academically.
10. The University's faculty and staff will offer enhanced tutoring, advising, and alternate course delivery methods for students who may need to isolate or quarantine during the semester.

**ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH CONTINUITY**

11. Trainings for new and existing technology will be developed and made available for students, faculty, and staff in face-to-face and virtual format. The training schedule will be published and communicated broadly.
12. The University is exploring purchase of laptops and wifi to distribute to faculty and staff to support working remotely. The appropriate software will be added to the laptop along with tracking software.
13. CITS will conduct an assessment to determine what additional network and personnel support would be needed to support the additional technology services.
14. The Office for Academic Affairs is working in consultation with the Schools and Registrar to determine the feasibility of offering a 100% online mini-mester between the Fall and Spring terms.

**Academic Calendar**

With the approval of Mississippi’s Institutions of Higher Learning Board of Trustees, Alcorn has modified its Fall 2020 academic calendar. The University’s Academic Calendar has been condensed this semester to minimize student travel to and from campus during the holidays for the safety and well-being of our students. Classes will now begin on Monday, August 17, 2020. The University will hold midterm examinations from October 5-9, 2020. In-person instruction is finalized on Wednesday, November 25, 2020. There will be a finals week of three days, Wednesday through Friday, December 2-4, 2020.

Alcorn State’s Commencement will be determined at a later date. The Spring Semester will begin on Monday, January 11, 2020.

**The modified calendar and delivery mode of instruction is subject to change based on prevailing guidance and in consultation with IHL instructions.**

**MONDAY, AUGUST 3**

Regular Registration Continues

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5**

Last Day for Remission of Fee Forms for Fall Semester

**MONDAY, AUGUST 10**

Leadership Meeting Faculty & Staff  
Institutes/School Meetings

**AUGUST 11 & 12**

Student Orientations – Virtual

## ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH CONTINUITY

**AUGUST 12-14**

ACT Residual Test

**AUGUST 15-16**

Burrus Hall & Revel Hall Move-in

**MONDAY, AUGUST 17**

Classes Begin – Virtual

Late Registration Begins

Last Day to Drop Class and Receive Tuition Refund

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 21**

Last Day to Drop Class without a Grade

Late Registration Ends: Last Day to Add Classes

**AUGUST 22-23**

Robinson Hall, Honors Hall, Natchez Campus Move-in

**AUGUST 29-30**

Heritage Village B & D Move-in

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1**

No-Show Reporting by Faculty

Last Day to Pay Fees and Avoid Being Removed from All Classes

**SEPTEMBER 6-8**

Heritage Village A & C, Lott Hall Move-in

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7**

Labor Day Holiday (University closed)

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**

In-person Instruction Begins

Students Removed from Classes due to Non-attendance

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11**

Deadline to Submit Application for Degree for Fall 2020 – \$50 Fee

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14**

Late Application for Degree for Fall 2020 – \$100 Fee

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18**

Last Day to Drop Class without Grade

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21**

Drop Class with Grade of WP/WF in Effect

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24**

Founder's Day Convocation (Virtual)

**OCTOBER 5-9**

Mid-Semester Examinations

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 12**

Mid-Semester Grades Recorded in BANNER by Faculty – 12:00 Noon

Pre-Registration Begins for Spring 2021

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13**

Last Day to Withdraw from a Course

Last Day to Withdraw from the University

Last Day to Submit Late Application for Degree – \$100 Fee

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24**

Traditional/Hybrid Fall Courses End

## ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH CONTINUITY

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25**  
Residence Halls Close – 2:00 PM

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25-27**  
Thanksgiving Holiday

**NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 1**  
Review Days

**DECEMBER 2-4**  
Final Examinations

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 11**  
Fall Semester Ends

Final Grades Due in BANNER and  
Course Assessments – 5:00 PM

Degrees Conferred (Effective December 11)

**MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2021**  
Spring 2021 Semester Begins



To view the full academic calendar online, please visit [www.alcorn.edu/calendar](http://www.alcorn.edu/calendar).

**Guidance for Face-to-Face Instruction for Fall 2020**

Alcorn State University's overarching guidance on Fall 2020 classes was provided by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning at May Board Meeting. IHL and Alcorn recognize that face-to-face instruction is a vitally important element for all students attending the university, and as long as health guidance does not prohibit, ASU is committed to in-person instruction to the extent possible. The following health and safety procedures are being implemented to support face-to-face instruction for fall 2020.

1. Facial coverings will be **REQUIRED** for all students and faculty in classrooms and teaching labs.
2. Physical distancing to the extent possible in teaching spaces is required
3. Facilities will provide nightly sanitization and cleaning
4. Additional cleaning supplies available in each classroom
5. The University will invest in posting signage throughout all spaces to reinforce policies and safety measures
6. Faculty will build a digital shell in CANVAS for every course
7. A thorough evaluation of all space on campus that could be used for in-person instruction is being completed. The appropriate room capacity will be used for in-

## ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH CONTINUITY

person instruction based on classroom layout with safety considerations in mind.

8. Schools and departments are working with the Provost to develop course continuity plans for instruction and academic support. A plan is being developed to support continuous remote delivery in the event that we must halt in-person instruction at some point during the semester as well as to support students who may not feel well or develop COVID-19 symptoms to continue education.



### Research

1. Research activities, labs and facilities may resume operations if university safety protocols and physical distancing requirements are met.
2. Specific protocols were provided in the research continuity document and will continue to be updated regularly. [Guidelines for Alcorn State University Research](#)
3. Supervisors and PIs are responsible for training and communicating all safety requirements to students and others who use the facility.
4. Human Subject Research and IACUC guidance regarding approvals and conducting research are provided in the research protocol.

### Meetings

1. Organizers are required to determine maximum occupancy based on social distance guidelines prior to the meeting
2. Participants are expected to minimize physical interactions
3. Organizers are expected to disinfect and sanitize all furniture and equipment before and after meeting
4. Participants are required to wear face coverings during the meeting
5. Use technology (i.e. Zoom, WebEx, etc.) should be used whenever possible
6. Participants should limit the use of shared items (i.e. pens, notebooks, tools, etc.)

## FINANCE AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Designated staff have been identified for each division who are responsible for the procurement of COVID-19 related equipment and supplies. The Vice President for each area will communicate to reports the process for making request. These request will then be funneled to the assigned personnel.

The Division of Finance and Administration will be responsible for tracking all expenses related to COVID-19. Potential reimbursements under CARES ACT or any other stimulus program will be facilitated through the Division of Finance and Administration. The Office for University Compliance in collaboration with Internal Audit will monitor and ensure proper tracking and application of resources.



### Human Resources

Prior to and upon returning to work, employees must adhere to all University, state, and national guidelines regarding personal health responsibility. Therefore, employees will be required to self-monitor their own health daily and contact Alcorn State Health Services/ or their medical provider if they are symptomatic and/or exposed to COVID-19.

1. All employees will be given A Brave Start kit, which will include a thermometer, face masks, hand sanitizer, and other items deemed essential by health officials at the beginning of the fall semester.
2. Faculty and staff will be required to complete the questionnaire in the [Self-Reporting Portal](#)
3. Daily self-administered health checks will be required of all employees.
4. A return to work questionnaire will be used for faculty and staff in order to protect the health and safety of our campus community.
5. If diagnosed with COVID-19, employees must stay home, contact Alcorn State Health Services and inform close contacts if diagnosed with COVID-19.
6. All employees testing positive should participate in contact tracing investigations, as determined by the state and local health departments.
7. All employees must wear a face covering, to the greatest extent practicable and unless exempted with documentation by a medical professional, including for any

## FINANCE & BUSINESS OPERATIONS

interactions between co-workers or while in common travel areas of the office (e.g., hallways, conference rooms, bathrooms, entries, and exits).

8. Employees are not required to wear face covering while alone in personal offices or if doing so would pose a serious threat to their health or safety.
9. Special accommodations will be given through Human Resources to employees in the CDC-defined COVID-19 high-risk population category, if requested by the employee with the appropriate documentation
10. All employee meetings will continue to be held remotely as much as possible, with slow integration of small in-person meetings, where all official safety and health guidance will be followed.
11. Common areas within employee offices should not be used.
12. If any common areas, such as kitchens, should be used, employees must wear face coverings to the greatest extent practicable, unless exempted with documentation by a medical professional.
13. Employees will be strongly encouraged to have a flu vaccination.



[To view complete the Faculty/Staff Self-Reporting questionnaire, please visit www.alcorn.edu/facultystaffselfreport.](http://www.alcorn.edu/facultystaffselfreport)

### **University Contractors**

1. All outside contractors performing services on campus, which brings them into contact with students, faculty, staff, or campus visitors, **MUST** wear appropriate PPE.
2. Contractors **MUST** hold their employees to the same standards applied to University employees.
3. Any contract worker who appears to be sick should not come to campus.

## FINANCE & BUSINESS OPERATIONS

4. Outside contractors shall notify the *Special Assistant to the CFO* immediately if any of their employees who have worked on campus within the previous 14 days are diagnosed with any COVID-19.



### **Facilities, Buildings, and Grounds**

1. Hand sanitizer stations will be located at each of the entrances to campus facilities, with significant attention paid to academic and office buildings, the J.D. Boyd Library, Clinton Bristow Jr. dining facilities, restrooms, residence halls and other campus locations that incur frequent visitors.
2. Facilities Management will coordinate with every unit on campus all physical barrier needs, such as the installation of plexiglass shields, etc. and install where deemed necessary.
3. A Brave Start educational signage will be placed within every facility on campus.
4. Facilities will provide the University with their cleaning plan and modify it to meet the ongoing cleaning and disinfecting needs of the campus.
5. Facilities will continue to regularly clean and disinfect all other campus facilities, particularly high-traffic areas such as academic and office buildings, JD. Boyd Library, Clinton Bristow Jr. dining facilities, bathrooms, residence halls, computer labs, research spaces, studios, and other areas.
6. Special cleaning attention and disinfection efforts will be paid to high-touch surface areas, such as elevator call buttons, door handles, handrails, drinking fountains, restrooms, common spaces, etc. throughout campus.

### **Regional Campuses and other University Facilities**

Alcorn State's regional campuses, the livestock facilities and all other University facilities will adhere to the same guidelines and procedures contained herein or adhere to similar guidelines.

### **Travel and Events**

1. University-sponsored travel during Fall 2020 will continue to be on hold for students, faculty, and staff, unless deemed necessary by the President and/or Vice Presidents

## FINANCE & BUSINESS OPERATIONS

of the University, or amended based upon state and national safety and health guidance.

2. Any University-sponsored travel that does occur will follow all official safety and health guidelines.
3. Large events (since this definition and guidance are changing regularly, large events will be defined as fall 2020 begins) significantly increase the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, decisions that would entail large gatherings must be approved in advance and will be closely evaluated.
4. An emphasis on outdoor events will occur with appropriate social distancing and adherence to all safety and health guidelines across the University's campuses and facilities, as outdoor events reduce the risks of viral transmission.
5. The University will continue to determine which events and meetings can be changed to virtual events based on a well-defined decision matrix.
6. Events that occur on Alcorn State's campuses, or are officially approved events, will meet all safety and health guidelines, including but not limited to group and individual visits to campus. These guidelines are also strongly recommended for any off-campus student social event.
7. Guidelines will be established for the rescheduling of any campus event. All rescheduled events will be consistent with the current campus policy and approved by the University.
8. New dates will be determined for all rescheduled events, but with the caveat that these dates could change if Mississippi experiences a surge in COVID-19 cases and with the advice and consent of safety and health authorities.
9. Capacity and social distancing measures will be determined, using all state and federal health guidelines, for future on-campus events.
10. The aforementioned guidance includes Greek and University recognized student organization events.
11. Campus admission group tours are canceled for the fall and will be rescheduled once it is safe to resume group tours.



## CAMPUS LIFE

1. All students are asked to self-isolate two weeks prior to coming to campus for fall 2020. Avoid parties, large gatherings, BBQs, and other social events that may contribute to becoming infected with COVID-19.
2. Students will be required to complete the questionnaire in the [Self-Reporting Portal](#) prior to their arrival on campus for the fall 2020 semester.
3. Daily self-administered health checks will be required of all students.
4. All students will be given A Brave Start kit, which will include a thermometer, face masks, hand sanitizer, and other items deemed essential by University, state, and federal guidance, at the beginning of the fall semester.
5. Student conduct guidelines, in particular regarding social distancing enforcement, PPE requirements, etc. will be established by Student Affairs. Up to date Student Conduct Guidelines are located in the [Student Code of Conduct Handbook](#).
6. Intramural/Club Sport protocols will follow all established state and federal guidelines in order to maintain the safety and health of all involved.
7. Students will be strongly encouraged to have a flu vaccination.
8. All sessions of New Student Orientation will be held virtual at designated date and times. The most up-to-date information is located on [University College webpage](#).
9. The university will implement a curfew for the fall 2020 semester.



[To view complete the Student Self-Reporting questionnaire, please visit www.alcorn.edu/studentselfreport.](#)

### Campus Housing

1. Guidelines and training will be developed for Residence Advisors (RAs), Residence Directors (RDs), Residential Community Coordinators (RCCs) to reinforce social distancing/capacity limits, and that an overall safe and healthy environment is maintained within the residence halls.

## CAMPUS LIFE

2. RA's will go through mandatory training on all signs/symptoms of COVID-19 and develop wellness check plans for students while following all state and federal health guidelines.
3. When advised by the University regarding if and/or when common areas can resume, individuals must wear cloth face masks in common areas to the greatest extent practicable or unless exempted with documentation by a medical professional, and follow additional *A Brave Start guidelines*.
4. When common areas are revived, the Housing Office will work with Facilities Management to reconfigure seating in them to meet occupancy requirements.
5. Room occupying guidelines for student health and safety will be established.
6. Student move-in and move-out schedules will be staggered, with an appointment process implemented.
7. Additional cleaning schedules will be executed for all public areas and restrooms in the residence halls.
8. Specific training will be provided to all students living in the residence halls regarding proper cleaning of bathrooms and acceptable social distancing protocol while in the residence hall.
9. Update guidelines are located on the [Residence Life webpage](#).

**Clinton Bristow Jr. Dining**

1. Sodexo, the University's dining contractor, has developed guidelines to support all campus initiatives regarding the restart. [Sodexo – Together We Rise: Dining on Campus in the Now and New Normal. A Guide to Campus Dining Safety in the Wake of COVID-19](#)
2. All Brave Dining employees will wear PPE and follow social distancing protocols in the kitchen, serving and dining areas at all times.
3. Open seating restrictions, proper social distancing and other health guidelines will be required in University dining spaces, with no more than 50% normal occupancy seating, or allowable occupancy based on University, local, state and federal guidance.

## CAMPUS LIFE

4. All high-contact surfaces (counter-tops, doors, trash bins, etc.) will be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
5. Hand sanitizing stations will be provided at the entrance to all dining facilities, with signage requiring use before entering and after exiting the facilities.



### **Alcorn State University Bookstore**

1. Follett, the University's contracted vendor, has developed guidelines to support all campus initiatives regarding the restart. [Follett Campus Ready Plan Fall 2020 – Business Unusual: Fall 2020 & Covid-19 Campus Store Readiness Plan.](#)
2. All employees will wear PPE and follow social distancing protocols when delivering in-person services.
3. Follett will develop a multi variant approach for students to procure books and supplies.
4. A comprehensive communication plan will be developed and deployed to ensure that students and faculty are kept up-to-date for book orders, rentals, purchases, etc.
5. Follett will work with The Office of the Provost to explore more technology based approaches to support instruction and the academic experience.

### **Athletics**

1. Decisions about holding particular athletic activities, practices, and events (organized and informal) and under what conditions will be determined on a case-by-case basis, with full adherence to University, state, and national health guidelines and in compliance with NCAA and Southwestern Athletic Conference guidelines.
2. The Athletics Director will communicate NCAA and Conference policy, protocol, and/or decisions to the University Administration, as the situation arises.
3. The use of weight rooms and training/treatment rooms must be scheduled through athletics staff to reinforce proper social distancing and occupancy limits.
4. Enhanced cleaning and disinfectant protocols will be established for all athletics facilities with guidance from state and federal authorities, medical professionals, NCAA, and the Southwestern Athletic Conference.

## CAMPUS LIFE

5. Athletics will implement a predetermined spectator access model regarding required PPE and reduced capacity seating for all athletic events, based upon social distancing guidelines as a percentage of overall capacity or prescribed square footage per person.
6. Athletics will ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that all fans and volunteers will wear a cloth face mask, unless exempted with documentation by a medical professional, when attending events.
7. Athletics fans and volunteers should follow all state and federal safety and health guidelines when attending events.
8. All concessions equipment and areas will continue to be cleaned and disinfected in advance of the fall semester. In addition, all concession equipment and areas will be cleaned thoroughly before and after usage, once health officials deem athletic events appropriate.



## CONTRIBUTORS

The A Brave Start represents the efforts and expertise of individuals who represent the broad constituents of the campus. Intentional efforts were made to be inclusive in developing a strategy that would support the University's efforts to ensure the safest start possible under such unpredictable and unprecedented circumstances. The document is a work in progress. These committees will continue to work on implementing the various tactical strategies outlined as well as adjustments required as we continue to monitor and track the progression of COVID-19.



### **Alcorn State University Safe Start Task Force Committee**

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**Ms. Dorothy Davis, MSN, RN, Co-Chair**, Director of Health and Disability Services

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**Dr. Wanda C. Fleming**, Chief Human Resources Officer

**Ms. Tasha Brown**, President Staff Senate

**Dr. Linda Godley**, Professor Cora S. Balmat School of Nursing

**Mr. Ray White**, Fire Chief

**Mr. Douglas Stewart**, Chief of Police

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Dr. Cornelius Wooten, Senior Vice President for Finance, Administration, and Operations

## CONTACT

### **A Brave Start – Inquiries Regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

For questions, concerns, or suggestions regarding Alcorn operations and COVID-19 (the disease caused by the novel coronavirus) please visit our [Inquiries Regarding Coronavirus page](#). Before submitting your question please review the [ASU Coronavirus Updates](#) and [A Brave Start](#) pages for the most up-to-date resources and frequently asked questions.



We will route your submission to the appropriate party on campus or send you the link to the information you need and reply as soon as we can.

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# **A BRAVE START**

For more information, please visit [www.alcorn.edu/abravestart](http://www.alcorn.edu/abravestart)