



Alcorn
State University

August 8, 2018

Dear Colleagues:

It is my great pleasure to welcome you back as we begin the 2018-19 academic year. I hope this message finds you well, rested, and in Brave spirits. As you finalize your syllabi and prepare Canvas uploads, here are a few Academic Affairs activities to facilitate a smooth semester startup.

Registration for our Fall 2018 Faculty & Staff Institute starts at 8:00 a.m. on August 14th in the James L. Bolden Campus Union Ballroom; the program kicks-off at 9:00 a.m. This annual Institute affords an opportunity to welcome new (adjunct) faculty and staff as we reaffirm our land-grant mission to transform lives through the positive power of education. Our keynote speaker is Dr. Charles Nutt, Executive Director of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). He will encourage thoughtful reflection on academic advising as a mission-critical, campus-wide effort.

Following the Institute, we inaugurate Alcorn's *1st Annual Advising All-Stars Recognition Luncheon* (by invitation). We will celebrate faculty and staff nominated by unit leaders for exemplary advising. Awardees include: Willie Anderson, Adrienne Arnold-Reed, Sherry Carradine, Sandra Davis, Zulfiquar Dogar, Sonia Eley, Teddrick Hargrave, Melton Harvey II, Rosemary Howard, Earnestine Lee, Melissa Mason, Felicia McGowan, Debbie Mizell, Marta Piva, Tracy Robinson, Larry Sanders, Karen Shedrick, Carolyn Smith, Jivanna Smith, LaToyia Smith, Wanda Stanwood, Stanley Stephney, Danielle Terrell, LaShawn Thompson, Cassandra Vaughn, Joanna Williams, and Lixin Yu. Kudos to each of them for their outstanding work in promoting student graduation success through advising, inside and outside academic spaces.

To further spur a culture of academic success through advising, go.alcorn has been enhanced. It is now mobile-based and includes a new tool--"Courses That Count" or "CTC." Courses That Count gives success stakeholders (advisors, chairs, deans, etc.) dashboard insight into their advisees' (pre-registered) classes to ensure conformance to the degree plan. Thus, advisors can spot classes outside the degree plan--that is, courses that do *not* count towards graduation!--and thereby take action to help students "course correct" (i.e. drop classes that do not count or add classes that do). Vigilant tracking of courses that count one semester at a time will help all of our students get to the graduation finish line. As the Mississippi state appropriations model explicitly ties funding to well-defined performance indices (completion and graduation), CTC will help all students achieve credit hours needed to complete their course requirements and attain the Alcorn degree. All deans should invite Mr. Dogar for workshop presentations.

We are alas at the final phases of the Blackboard to Canvas transition. This learning management system (LMS) change was a major feat, requiring the collaboration of many units over a short window of time. The transition time went beyond the anticipated summer I deadline, when faculty were expected to have opportunity to gain familiarity and proficiency with the Canvas LMS. In effort to keep you abreast and up-to-date, please know there will be, in addition to the 24/7 Hotline for Students, a separate Hotline specifically for faculty to call for Canvas support. That number will be released with the announcement of the Canvas server's availability. Instructors with any issues with the self-paced certification course, course migration from Blackboard to Canvas, or with questions should contact Mr. Stanley Stephney at 601-443-8063 or sdstephney@alcorn.edu.

I am also pleased to share some good news: The IHL Board of Trustees approved the following faculty members for tenure and promotion: Anant Singh (Associate Professor; Chemistry and Physics) and Valtreasa Tolliver-Cook (Associate Professor; Social Work). In addition, the Board approved Alexander Acholonu (Biology), Patrick Igboke (Horticulture), Kenneth Stallings (Animal Science), and M.S. Zaman (Biology) for professor emeritus status. Congratulations to our colleagues on their milestone achievements!

The university continues to go paperless to save students, faculty, and staff time and energy. These efficiencies can be parlayed into high-value, mission-critical areas (i.e. journal writing, research, innovative teaching, advising and mentoring students). All deans are now equipped with digital dashboards to process routine requests with dispatch and speed. More digitization, optimization, and automation are afoot to increase agility and customer service.

Alcorn will initiate two academic centers: Teaching & Learning and Undergraduate Education. The Center for Teaching & Learning will be fully staffed in Fall 2018. This Center is the result of a multitude of conversations and input from students, staff, faculty, the Faculty Senate and General Assembly. The Center will offer professional development programs to assist all faculty innovative and enhance instruction, methodology, and pedagogy. The Center for Undergraduate Education will offer community-based (service-learning) and global-based (internationalization) engagement. Instructors interested in integrating service-learning pedagogy and/or international research, scholarship, teaching should see Drs. Alipoe and Sturgis, respectively. They will visit units to discuss ways to infuse them in the curriculum. The Centers advance our mission “[...] to prepare graduates to be well-rounded future leaders of **high character** and to be successful in the **global marketplace** of the 21st century.”

Reaccreditation preparation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, our regional accreditor, is underway. The Reaffirmation Leadership Team (Valtreasa Tolliver-Cook, Carolyn Dupre, LaToya Hart, John Igwebuike, Donzell Lee) is installed. Self-Study preparation will involve the active participation of faculty, students and staff from all units and divisions. Let me plant the seed for action now: Please respond promptly to requests for participation (strategic planning, focus groups, and NSSE Survey); collaboration (subcommittees/facilitators); and information (indirect/direct measures, data, and reports) from the Leadership, QEP, and Self-Study teams. More information on SACSCOC to come.

Indeed, we have much to accomplish this academic year. With our motto in sight: service, scholarship, and dignity, we will continue to transform lives through the positive power of education. Thank you for your commitment to Alcorn and all you do for our students, in and out of the classroom. You make Alcorn such a special place for our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and citizens of the southwest Mississippi region. I look forward to seeing each of you at the Institute and working with you this academic year.

Respectfully,



John G. Igwebuike
Interim Provost & EVPAA