



DA: August 14, 2018
FR: John G. Igwebuike
Interim Provost & EVPAA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John G. Igwebuike".

TO: Alcorn Instructional Community

RE: **AY 2018-19 IMPORTANT REMINDERS & CONTRACTUAL EXPECTATIONS**

Welcome back to the new academic year. Last year, the Office of Academic Affairs sent a *Contractual Reminders & Expectations* memo aimed to keep everyone informed (See [2017 memo](#)). In staying with this practice of notifying the campus community of important focus areas, initiatives, and (new) policies, I bring to your attention the following items as we start the 2018-19 academic year:

Instruct First Day through Last Day

Instructors are to attend all scheduled class meetings at assigned times and places to ensure contact hour requirements are met in form and amount. No instructor may cancel a scheduled class after registration starts nor alter final, published course schedules (e.g. convert face-to-face class to online, change Canvas course to email, make a synchronous class asynchronous--or vice versa) without a dean's justification to the Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. Instructors who are unable to teach a class during the semester should identify a colleague as a substitute instructor approved by the chair. IHL guidelines require that Alcorn accounts for all contact hours for every credit hour in every course every semester. Alcorn attests and certifies the same in its annual reports. (See [Class Cancellation Memo](#)). Relatedly, full-time *staff* must gain supervisorial permission to teach a course and must not instruct during business hours (See memo→ [here](#)).

Assess Early . . . Assess Often

In addition to attendance monitoring, early assessment is a proven student success strategy that promotes student educational responsibility. The goal of early assessment is to implement an assessment activity to identify students early on who are in need of appropriate intervention support. In addition to daily attendance, early assessment offers a means to take proactive action sooner rather than later to assure student learning. Early assessment examples include quizzes, tests, assignments, (short) class activities, quick digital assessments, clicker-based questions, etc. Early assessment feedback promotes student educational responsibility as it gives students a heads-up as to whether they are learning what the instructor expects and can take action to improve learning before midterms/finals. The assessment data--or lack thereof--provides instructors crucial information upon which to take appropriate early action (counseling, coaching, information, explanation, etc.). To assist all students succeed, I ask all instructors to introduce an early assessment within the first two weeks of the semester. I know many of you already do this. If you do, thank you.

Assure Student Learning Outcomes

Instructors are expected to implement course activities that measure, monitor, and modify teaching methods to assure student learning outcome achievement. This practice includes collecting, analyzing, reporting (i.e. SACSCOC, NCAA Data Review, institutional effectiveness, and special accreditation requirements), and closing the loop for continuous improvement. Instructors should report to their chairs,

deans, and/or departmental representative the results (data, analyses, artifacts, portfolios, etc.) of approved student learning outcomes, at the end of each semester/term. Deans/chairs should convene a departmental meeting to discuss the results to determine what changes should be made to the overall program (i.e. updated syllabi, new interventions, additional/deletions of courses, change in course sequence etc.) Consistent with obligations under the law, the University will provide reasonable accommodation to any student with a disability who requires accommodation to have an opportunity to achieve learning outcomes. Instructors must first receive from the Office of Student Health Disability Services the prerequisite accommodation upon which the student accommodation is made. Dr. LaToya Hart, Institutional Assessment Director is a valuable resource in this regard.

Encourage Student Office Visits

Instructors are to provide students opportunity for academic advising, communication, class counsel, and career coaching during scheduled office hours (e.g., 10 hours/week, spread across 3-5 days per week). Office hours must include face-to-face meetings, but a portion may include synchronous interaction depending on course modality (e.g., online courses). Office hour postings should be at reasonable times, include instructor name, contact information, location, and schedule. Postings should be (a) made on/around the instructor's door; (b) available in the department office; and, (c) listed on course syllabi. Instructors should--as a most reasonable courtesy--inform chairs/deans and students when unable to meet during scheduled office hours, with cancellations posted on the door. (See *Faculty Handbook §6.4: Responsibilities: Maintain approved office hours for conferences and academic advisement; See also §6.5*).

Protect Privacy & Maintain Confidentiality of Records/Sensitive Information

According to the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), education personnel are to protect the identity of students' personally identifiable information and keep student records and information confidential, especially where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. Grades, evaluations, and advising information linked to personal identifiers may not be publicly disclosed without the student's prior written consent. Social security/credit card numbers shall neither be collected nor stored without VPAA authorization/designation to do so. All email with personally identifiable information must be encrypted (i) before dispatch outside the Alcorn intranet or (ii) prior to being received from the internet. The University's Title IV funding is linked to maintaining privacy of student records and immediate reporting of all data breaches to the appropriate area vice president. Let us all do our part to ensure the privacy/confidentiality of student, academic, employment, health, or personnel records/information. (See [FERPA Policy](#)).

Acknowledge Smoke Free Policy

In July 2018, Alcorn promulgated policy declaring the campus as smoke free. The health and well-being of students, faculty, and staff are of paramount priority. Thought this policy will be strictly enforced with fines, ultimately, the true compliance comes about by way of mutual cooperation of consideration of all students, faculty, staff, visitors, alumni, and guests for one another. Therefore, your support, supervisorial oversight, and cooperation are appreciated. All employees in Academic Affairs should complete the Smoke Free Acknowledgement Form → [here](#).

Be on Notice: Firearms Policy

Under Mississippi law, possession of firearms on campus is prohibited and constitutes a felony. Per §97-37-7(2), *Mississippi Code Annotated*, visitors with Enhanced Carry Permit may not carry a concealed firearm in sensitive areas designated ("non-public"). Alcorn will be posting signs delineating such

non-public spaces; and, by way of advanced notification, policy is forthcoming to provide greater clarification. (See [§ 97-37-7\(2\)](#)).

Note Digitized Remission of Fees Process

The tuition waiver form is now paperless. To ensure success of our full-time personnel undertaking educational studies, supervisor and adviser involvement is critical to the new digital process and student success. Accordingly, remission of fees applicants must (i) obtain supervisor approval (e.g. email confirmation) to take requested classes and (ii) garner adviser confirmation that the requested courses are contained in the degree plan and are indeed “courses-that-count” towards degree attainment. The application must be completed before the calendar deadline as the University deadline will be strictly enforced to ensure proper review, audit, and account remission. The new digital process should save time and afford faculty and staff added convenience (See [Remission memo](#)→ [here](#); See [go.alcorn](#): “Courses that Count”).

Remember: Only the President “Represents” the University

The chief institutional officer alone is the legal “representative” and official spokesperson for the university, as expressly delegated by the IHL Board of Trustees. No one may represent the university without express, written permission. Employees should neither act--nor give the appearance of acting--on behalf of Alcorn(’s president) when communicating with governmental officials, NCAA, SACSCOC, IHL, industry, media, the public, accrediting agencies, the federal government, or other third-parties--without express written permission/delegation. (See memo: http://www.alcorn.edu/data/files/gallery/ContentGallery/Advisory_Caution_In_Representing_Alcorn.pdf).

Execute Employment Contracts by deadline: August 31, 2018

Alcorn disseminates *Mississippi Board of Trustees Institutions of Higher Learning* employment contracts per a defined process to tenured and tenure-track employees. Specifically, the Provost issues contracts to unit deans (issue date: August 17, 2018). Deans will deliver contracts on the day of receipt, if possible, to those faculty members who are employed at the time. Faculty members shall return their signed original contract to the Dean in a timely manner, i.e., no later than 14-days from the issue date, to enable the Dean to return all unit contracts to the Provost. Deans are to return all signed contracts to the Provost by the submission date: COB Friday, August 31, 2018. A faculty member’s failure to return the signed contract within the 14-day period (or before the expiration of any written extension granted by the Provost) may subject the faculty member to disciplinary action up to, and including termination. **The deadline to return IHL contracts to Academic Affairs is COB Friday, August 31, 2018.** *Important: Failure to return a signed contract by the deadline may result in abandonment of the faculty member’s position with the university, revocation of the contract offer by the university, and/or termination of the faculty member’s relationship with the university* (MS Attorney General’s Office).

Once again, welcome back to campus. I am excited at the possibilities of what we will accomplish together by way of our cherished motto: **service**, **scholarship**, and **dignity** (we extend to each other). As we work together in the spirit of cooperative excellence, let us strive to ensure that every student admitted has the opportunity to succeed and obtain the prized Alcorn degree in 4-years or less. Go Braves!